

HASSAKE TO HOLLYWOOD

St. Simon's Church, Syria, 5th Century

MAR APREM

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Most Rev. Dr. Mar Aprem (formerly George Mookken) was born in Trichur, Kerala, India, in June 1940. Educated in India, England, and America, he specialised in the field of Church History. He was the President of the Church History Association of India.

He holds two master's degree in Church History, one from the United Theological College, Bangalore (M. Th., Serampore, 1966) and the other from the Union Theological Seminary, New York (S. T. M. degree, 1967). He was a candidate for Doctor of Theology (Th. D.) degree at Princeton Theological Seminary, U. S. A. when he was made bishop of Bagdad, Iraq in 1968. Later he earned his D.Th. degree from Serampore University, near Calcutta.

Ordained a deacon on June 25, 1961, he became a priest on the day he completed twenty five years of age on 13 June, 1965. He was consecrated Bishop on 21st September, 1968 and promoted as a Metropolitan eight days later in Bagdad.

His Biography appears in the International Who's Who of intellectuals, Vol. 6, Cambridge. The International directory of distinguished leadership, first Edition, U. S. A. and others.

He was given "Men of Achievement" Award of the International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, England in 1970 and the 'Medal of Merit' of the Coptic Orthodox Cultural Centre, Venice for his cultural and ecumenical achievements.

Since 1968 He is the Head of the Church of the East in India with his headquarters in Trichur. He is active in several religious and social organisations all over India.

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HASSAKE TO HOLLYWOOD

(A Travelogue of three tours)



MAR APREM

1998

TRICHUR, KERALA, INDIA

HASSAKE TO HOLLYWOOD

(English) Travelogue

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FOREWORD

Here is yet another travelogue by His Grace Mar APREM—as interesting, as instructive, and as entertaining as ever; capable of vying with his own joke books for popularity. Books in these two genres coming from the author's experienced hand have proved time and again their ability to hold the reader spellbound, containing as they do a good deal that is eminently quotable.

Recently at Mount St. Thomas in Kochi Mar APREM was leaving after delivering one of his inimitable talks. He entrusted a copy of his latest book of jokes to be handed over to His Eminence Antony Cardinal Padiyara. Seeing this the Archbishop of Tellicherry Mar Valiyamattom remarked "Here is one 'Joke-man' searching for another 'Joke-man'." Following this this writer witnessed the strange sight of many of the ecclesiastical dignitaries present at the function bandying joke after joke from Mar APREM's 'Joke-books'. Some popularity indeed!

What endears the author of this travelogue to the reader is the human touch and transparent *bonhomie* in the Metropolitan's attitudes and actions in every situation—be it at the airport, the Synod hall, the Metropolitan's palace, at a wedding or baptism, or in the street. No wonder one comes across many remote nooks and corners of the world where Mar APREM is a household name. While reading these pages something of the enthusiasm, the author's joyful and jovial attitude to things in general without losing sight of what is really important, rubs on to the reader also and he follows the Metropolitan's exploits with a sense of urgency and excitement.

The matter of fact narrative style, with of course the ubiquitous touch of humour that makes all the author's works pleasant reading, the quick procession of persons, events, and places give the reader the pleasure that is afforded by a well-written and well-produced play. At the same time crammed into these pages we come across much useful information on the land and people visited on travel bargains (some of the tips from this globe-trotter are Fodor-class), political commentary, local colour, fashion notes, descriptions of social, economic, and technological changes that have taken place since the Metropolitan's previous visit to the place under review, and what-not—and above all information on the state of the Assyrian Church and Church personages. Memories of even the "minor characters" in this travel book—an altar-assistant here or a girl presenting a bouquet there—with their joys and sorrows, with their little anxieties and pleasures, with their little acts of thoughtfulness and fact remain indelible long after one has done with the reading of the book.

The accounts of St. Simon Stylite (and the pictures) the trip to the Universal Studios, the breakfast with the adopted children, the Metropolitan's Hollywood adventures, and much more will captivate the reader's attention. But one cannot fail to detect the undercurrent of constant concern on the author's part for the past, the present and the future of the Church of India of which His Grace is the head.

The author's keen sense of observation and attention to the smallest detail—whether it is the price of a touristcard or the trouble created by lost baggage

maintaining your altar vestments—contribute a sense of quality to the whole book. And the dramatic, quick-moving action gets the reader fully involved even in the affairs of characters who appear in the narrative for the space of just a few lines.

This is the Metropolitan's fiftieth book. People who know the Metropolitan intimately, here or abroad—more abroad than here, one feels, what with Mar Aprem's thirty or so journeys abroad and with his immense penchant for correspondence—are waiting with bated breath to witness the day when the number of volumes from his restless pen overtakes his years. That moment, I surmise, cannot be very far with two or three books already on the anvil in Mar Aprem's 58th year, and the cover of the next title already printed! Happy reading.

Illur, 20th Feb., 1998.

George Menachery

PREFACE

This is my 50th book. My friends and well-wishers want me to celebrate the occasion. More than celebration I am keen on improving the quality of the books, both in contents and appearance.

I have packed this book with information on my three foreign tours between Feb. 96 and July 97. Instead of one book on each tour I have decided on a 3 in 1 or 2 in 1 as the foreign tours have become more frequent than it used to be. Earlier foreign tour was only once a year. I could spare time to write a travelogue once a year, as I used to write one book on church history, sermons etc. once a year.

The quality of the production can be improved. Better technology of printing by offset machine is available in India. But due to my desire to keep the cost of the book to a minimum possible the books are not printed in glossy paper with multicoloured photographs of the people and the places I have visited.

Then the question of the language of the book. Not because I have the mastery of the King's English, but just because I wish many of the people whom I owe gratitude for their hospitality during my stay with them to understand only if I write in their tongue. In the English Daily *Indian Express* which I read regularly the following remarks are made about the study of English in my home state Kerala in South India. *Express Week*, Sept. 27. 1997, p. 1.

"English language is neither a boon to celebrate, nor a burden to curse. We cannot underestimate its importance as the Queen's vernacular, brought into this land by those who suppressed us for centuries.

We have to accept it as an international language, give due importance to its study if we wish to march successfully into the 21st century hand in hand with counterparts from other parts of this vast nation."

May my books help my readers to march successfully into the 21st century with a better knowledge of many countries. American teenagers have created new language with the beeper known as pager. In the small device known as pagers the digital display screen is small. One cannot give long sentences for communication. Usually it was used by doctors on duty in hospitals. The beepers give indications to call their hospital as there may be an emergency after the doctor had gone home.

The digital display screen is small that you cannot communicate much more than a number. Hence the new language becomes very useful. Let us see what the teenagers have developed as their pager language.

21 means I want to talk to you alone

07 ,, I've got a secret

1 ,, let's go for a drink

When comes 8.30 to fix the time.

7-1 means I am late

776 ,, you are really revolting

0001000	means	I am really lonely right now
141	„	I am with you on your side
100-2-1	„	The odds are really against you
8642	„	I am going to get even with you
10	„	You are perfect
2-2	„	Let's go dancing

The above information is taken from an article of the Guardian News Service from Washington published in the *Indian Express*, dated Sept. 25, 1997, Kochi., p. 15. The same source discloses that there are 50 million pagers in the U. S. The number of pagers in use in India is not available. Motorola, the biggest manufacturer of this small size device, gives advice on beeper etiquette.

"Don't pull your pager out and check it in class during religious service, or other inappropriate times."

Arundhati Roy's first novel had not only the highest advance paid to a novel but also set a record of sales. Within a few months it got selected for the prestigious British Booker Prize. The final was not glamorous because several people in England criticized the list as "blindingly boring."

This novel *The God of Small Things* appeared in the best seller list of *The Sunday Times*, *The New York Times* and several other frontline publications. America is not generally generous with Indian books. Although Vikram Seth who studied in California had a phenomenal success

his book *The Golden Gate*, His second celebrated book *Suitable Boy* lost half a million dollars in the U. S. A. England however, *A Suitable Boy* was a sensational success.

Indians view these success stories in different angles. Some think that Roy's success will attract outside world Indian literature. Others think that it is commercial tricks of the publishers that made this "freak thing."

In India Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* had 50,000 copies sold in the last 5 years. But 32,000 copies of Roy's *The God of Small Things* were already sold in India six months since the launching of the book on April 5, 1997.

I have not read the book except a few excerpts that quote the opinion of critics that give an insight of the worth of the book. "A well timed launch, a surfeit of gushing, laudatory review and a few well planned reading appearances" account for the success of this work. A paragraph from Express Magazine of the *Indian Express* dated October 12, 1997 is quoted below in order to give a glimpse into the literary worth of this book. P. 2.

One overwrought reviewer felt the lush grasses and vines in the novel against her skin and smelt the pickled mangoes and sweet banana jam. Hmmm.....Typically, many reviewers went overboard exulting about the language...the rogue capital letters, nonsense rhymes.....

Salman Rushdie, the controversial Indian writer who is a fugitive in England, assesses the 50 years of writing in English language by Indian writers. He argues that "on

the map of world literature, India has been undersized for too long, that age of obscurity is coming to an end
Frontline, August 9-22, 1997, p.101

Rushdie's remarks about the status of English writing in India today is correct, *Frontline*, op. cit: p. 102

Indian English, sometimes unattractively called "Hinglish", is not "English" English to be sure any more than Irish or American or Caribbean English is. And it is a part of the achievement of the writers in this volume to have found literary voices as distinctively Indian, and also as suitable for any and all of the purposes of art, as those other Englishes forged in Ireland, Africa, the West Indies and the United States.

India had 2.28 million tourists in 1996. This is the highest in South East Asia. Nepal has the second place with less than half a million tourists. The tourists in India spent 3027 million dollars. It is good for Indian economy to earn that much dollars. At the same time it is cheaper for the tourists because they would have to spend more if they had purchased Indian goods abroad.

I am grateful to Prof. George Menachery, the editor of *the St. Thomas Christian Encyclopaedia of India* who proved his genius in the field of publishing books on Church history by his recent work *The Nazarenes*, for taking time to write a 'Foreword' to this book. My gratitude goes also to Fr. T.O. Ignatius, the Secretary of Mar Timotheus Birth Centenary printing Press which printed this book casting out some printer's devil from the book which I was not able to detect in my busy schedule.

Trichur 680 001

20 February 1998

MAR APRE

CHAPTER 1

Visit to Syria

On Sunday 12 October 1996 I took off from Bombay 6.35 a. m. We spent 3.46 hours on flight from Bombay to Kuwait. Hindi movie was shown in the flight. We reached Kuwait at 10.15 a. m. according to my watch. That was 7.45 a. m. in Kuwait. My flight KU 551 bound for Damascus was to depart at 8.35 a. m. So there was no much time left. Since I had obtained a second boarding pass that was for KUWAIT to Damascus I did not have to go to the transfer counter to get the boarding pass. Usually the queue at the transfer counter had been long. I was able to get through the gate in a short time.

After spending about four hours in Damascus airport I travelled to Aleppo by a smaller aircraft. We were received by Dr. Syriani and others and taken to the residence of Archbishop Mar Gregorius Ibrahim Hanna of the Syrian Orthodox Church where we stayed for the Syriac commission meeting of the Fro-Oriente.

On 16th the Assyrian students in the University were gathered in the residence of Bishop Anton Audo of the Chaldean Church. Bishop Mar Bawai Soro and myself addressed the gathering,

On Thursday the 17th Oct. Archdeacon Geevarghese Athaniel took me to Hassake along with Fr. Luis Zacko of

Mosul who had come from Iraq to attend Pro Oriente meeting. As we approached Hassake our car turned around. But nobody was hurt. When we reached our Cathedral the evening (*Ramsha*) prayer was over. But for the next five days I led the Ramsha prayers in the Cathedral. The Assyrians were wondering how I was able to use the Hudra prayer book. I told them that Hudra book was printed in Trichur in our Mar Narsai Press.

Hassake

On Friday 18th I conducted holy Qurbana in the basement of our Cathedral which is incomplete. It is a big and beautiful cathedral. As there is no bishop in Syria Archdeacon Geevarghese Athniel is the Administrator of the diocese of Syria which has 14 priests and about fifteen thousand members. The Assyrians settled down in the Khabour valley since 1935. Late Malik Yacob, son of Malik Ismail of Upper Tiairi tribes was the leader. Different tribes live in different villages. I found almost all tribes there. Hassake being a town has members from all tribes living in the villages.

I saw a name board on the desk of the Archdeacon, I thought it was his name in Arabic. When I asked about it I was amused to hear that it was neither his name nor the name of the Church. Instead it is "No smoking please" in Arabic. I am happy that people in the Arab countries have started not only to give up smoking but also to ask others to save themselves from the danger of cancer.

Archdeacon is a scholar in Syriac and Arabic. His bookshelf has encyclopaedias, lexicons etc. He does not speak English. Yet he succeeded to communicate with

I am impressed by his interest in reading books about our faith.

He presented me copies of the two *Thurgama* he had written for two Memorial days in our Church. The *Turgama* on the Memorial of Mar Sawa was written by him when he was only a deacon in 1962. He was only 15 years old then. That *Turgama* began as follows.

*Oh Damhaimnien (eengee) b' had alaha kiana Kasya
Tlitha qnome Awa wavra uruha hayya*

The *Turgama* on the Memorial of Mar Sargis and Mar Bachus, martyrs, was written in 1986 after he became a priest. The last stanza of this 22-stanza-*Turgama* is as follows.

*Tav Shma limtha (eenga) dmakhiz bgalya Shlieha
mqadsha
Mathai Makhsa had min triesar dmakhiz hashu.*

Archdeacon Geovarghese Athniel keeps a book where he writes down all the information he gets from reading as well as interviews. He jotted down the names of all our Churches and the names of our clergy. Since the *voice of the East* from Trichur had published the names of 9 priests and 22 deacons I gave him a copy.

Then I asked him to supply me with the list of churches and priests in Syria. The useful list written by him in Assyrian is given below for the benefit of all who are interested to know about the Christians in Syria.

Qamishly

On Saturday Oct. 19 Archdeacon took me to Qamishly. A warm welcome was accorded to me at the entrance of our church. I celebrated Qurbana in the church dedicated to Mar Geevarghese. Qasha Andreos Adam is the priest of this parish. Shamasha Yonan translated my sermon. I had met his son in Berlin in 1980. After Qurbana we had breakfast in the hall. The parish committee presented me a small gold cross. This town is close to Urhai or Edessa which is on the other side in Turkey.

Saraspiedo

On Sunday 20th October, 1996 I conducted Qurbana at Saraspiedo. Since archdeacon Geevarghese Athniel comes from that Church he took a special interest that I conducted Qurbana in his village. The Church is named after Mar Kuriakose. The priest of the parish Qasha Kuriakose Odisho was at the entrance of the Church when we reached Saraspiedo.

We left Hassake at 7 a.m. and reached our destination within one hour. The choir sang a song of welcome. They threw flowers on the floor as a sign of welcome. I started Qurbana in time. Deacon Yonan Oraham who had interpreted my speech on Saturday at Qamishly was again there on Sunday. He told me, "I won't leave you till you leave." I had brought with me Qasha Geevarghese Thoma of New Britain, U. S. A. whose brother lives in Hassake. I told deacon Yonan that since Qasha Geevarghese Thoma is from the U. S. A. it is better that he interprets my sermon that day. The 76-year-old-deacon agreed instantly. I was happy because I knew that the Deacon had some difficulty in

interpreting my English. I know that many people in Mala are poor interpreters even if they know English language well.

Being a Sunday we had to read both Old Testament and the Epistle. Moreover Gospel lesson was read twice, i.e., Archdeacon translated into modern Assyrian after reading it in Old language (*lishana atieqa*). There was an unusually large number of people and children to receive communion. Therefore the service took $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours while it took only 2 hours each the previous two days.

Breakfast was at the house of late officer Dinkha, cousin of Archdeacon. It was the 40th day of the death of officer Dinkha. It is a custom to give breakfast to guests on the 40th day.

An Assyrian friend greeted me and told me that he used to receive the *Voice of the East* regularly. When I enquired his name he told "Majee Rev. Joseph," Then I remembered that his name was in the address list. When I told him that I remembered his name, he was happy.

Not only Church members but other relatives and friends of the family attended the breakfast given on the 40th day of the death. I enquired whether the priests used to go to the tomb to say the prayers. They had explained that on the 3rd day after the death the priests and relatives went near the tomb and said 3rd day prayers. But after the 3rd day the priests do not go. It is not true in India. The relatives want the priests to pray at the tomb not only on the 40th day, but also on every death anniversary.

Before we finished breakfast Qasha Bachus from Tell Tamar arrived. He is also a relative of the archdeacon. In addition to the priest of the parish, the priest of the neighbouring congregation also was present at the Qurbana. Therefore that priest must have cancelled the Sunday Qurbana in order to attend this service.

Tell Tamer

On Tuesday 22 Oct. I conducted Qurbana in Tell Tamer.

When I reached Tell Tamer, the choir was ready to receive me singing the Syriac song of welcome. Flowers were put in front of me. As it was Tuesday I thought there would not be enough people. Yet the Church became full soon after the Qurbana began.

"*Slothac Avoon Kaddisha*" in Syriac means "the prayer our holy father..." was the welcome song which the choir girls sang. Then they sang "*Avoon Dvashmaya*" Our Father.....

The Qurbana service took two-and-a-half hours. There were priests and deacons in the *haikla* (nave). But none of the deacons or priests could interpret my speech into English. Therefore Archdeacon sent for a teacher Rabbi Benyamin Somaya and we shifted one of the microphones to outside the altar, as the laymen are not allowed to enter our altar. I must state that Rabbi Benyamin did his interpretation well. I also used many gestures liberally to make my interpreter as well as the audience to understand the contents of my sermon even if there was any deficiency in translation.

We went to a restaurant nearby where a reception breakfast was arranged in my honour. The first item on the agenda was the presentation of a gold ring to me by a. Yohannan son of Dea. Yonan as his *Dashna*. I did not understand the word first. *Mavhauta* is the word for "gift" in the old language. *Dashna* may be modern Syrian for the word gift.

Qasha Eshaya Bachus is the Vicar of the parish at Tell Tamer. The Church is dedicated to *Qadishtha*. It is a strange name for a saint or a Church. I enquired whether the church in whose name it is dedicated is a male or female. It is a female saint as the feminine word *qadishtha* reminds us. Was it in the name of Marth Mariyam (St. Mary) or Marth Shmonie (St. Shmonie before Jesus) or Queen Helena, the mother of King Constantine, who discovered in Jerusalem in 324 A. D. the cross in which Christ was crucified? The clergy replied that it was dedicated to none of these.

The explanation they say is that some portion of the Holy relic from Jerusalem is brought and is hanging on eastern wall of this altar and hence the name of this church *Qadishtha*.

Tell Tamar is a good parish. There are about 400 families. The family of Zaia d' Malik Ismail, son of Malik Jacob Ismail, lives here. But as a member of the Parliament of Syria he lives in Damascus. When I told him later in Damascus that I had done Qurbana in his parish Church he told me that he was happy about it. But he regretted that he could not attend it as he was in Damascus.

Qasha Bachus has a good house behind the Church. The garden with grapes and other fruits attracted me as I entered his house. His daughter Rejina is called Jina. She is about one year old. She did not cry as I anticipated. Qasha Bachus Eshaya has four children.

1. Yosip, 12th grade
2. Susan, 11th grade
3. Yohannan, 6th grade
4. Rejina, 1 year old

Qasha Bachu's wife is the daughter of Qasha Dinkha Boodakh (green card) who travelled to Australia, America, Sweden etc. Qasha Dinkha is the priest of Mar Sawa Church. At Tell Tamar I met Qasha Geevarghese Odisho belonging to the old calendar. I had ordained him deacon in Sept 1968. His wife's brother named deacon Adhai also was with him. I had ordained him too in September 1968 in Bagdad along with Qasha Thomas Soro who became Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Kirkuk in Dec 1969.

On Monday 14th October he went to see St. Simon. It is a beautiful Church, built in the 5th century. St. Simon the stylite who was born in 387 lived as a monk. In his extreme ascetism he was sent out from the monastery he had joined. But as a single ascetic he lived on a pillar he had built.

He was a supporter of dyophysite Christology, i. e. Jesus Christ had two distinct natures, humanity and divinity. Pulcheria, sister of Emperor Theodosius II, who supported Nestorius was admirer of St. Simon. Emperor

ediosius II, too respected him. After his death this famous Church was constructed.

The Church was destroyed by earthquakes three times. After the second destruction in the 11th century Byzantine soldiers renovated it. But after the 3rd earthquake in the 17th century nobody renovated.

The altar is on the east. The altar has five windows. Mustafa, the guide who is a Muslim, told me that the five windows represent the five wounds of Jesus Christ on the cross. I do not know whether Mustafa's theological and historical interpretations are correct or not. He was so proud that he was the guide who had explained everything to Patriarch Hakkim when the Patriarch visited that church some five years ago.

Mustafa is a man of humour. He tells jokes to make the tourists happy so that he can get tips from them. As we noticed that I was carefully listening to his talk on St. Simeon he said that this pillar saint always had stood on that pillar. His followers used to put a ladder on the pillar on Sundays to carry a basket of food to this saint who always stood many meters above the floor. With a giggle he said, "Some tourists ask me how St. Simeon was going to bath room as he was always on the top of the pillar." He didn't answer it. Perhaps we would guess that there was a hole in that pillar. I do not bridle the imagination of the readers.

On 24 October 1996 before leaving the Guest House in Damascus of the Syrian Catholic Church I saw the book *The Amazing Life of the Syrian Monks* in the 4th-6th centuries authored by Ignacio Pena in 1991. This book

written in Spanish was translated into English by James Sullivan and was printed by the Franciscan Printing Press, Milan by offset. The front cover has an icon of St. Simeon the great who is the founder of the Stylite movement in the monastic history of the early Christian Church.

Since I had visited with other delegates of the Pro Oriente's Syriac Commission the exact location of St. Simeon's Cathedral I was interested to possess a copy of this book. When I read this well-printed book with lavish coloured photographs I was amazed by the number of monks who had lived between 4 and 6 centuries in the Christendom.

Most of these Churches and monasteries are in the dead cities of Syria. They are in ruins.

When we had gone to see St. Simeon's Church and other places I was impressed by the enthusiasm of Prof. Peter Hoffrichter of Salzburg in locating these places which are in ruins. When we searched for the Church where Theodoret of Cyrus had preached, we abandoned our search after walking through the rocks and hills. But Prof. Hoffrichter did not turn back until he finally stood on the pulpit where Theodoret had preached 1555 years ago. He knows all the details of early churches even after they had been destroyed.

A Stylite is not one who lives in style. A Stylite is a monk who lives on a pillar. They are called pillar saints. In appendix 2 of the book mentioned above there is a list of many Stylites down through the centuries. From 5th century to the 19th.

St. Simeon the Great in the 5th century is the founder of this movement. In the same century there was Daniel, Abrahamios, Theodolus, Josue, John and Eusebius.

5th century John, Simeon the Younger, Yonan, Eustacius, Chemaun of Erhab, Paul, Anthony, Simeon of Raqqa, Thomas of Dara, Habil or Abel, Zeora the little, Habi of Paitar, Arsinos, Jonathan, Samuel and John, Michael, Abraham & Maron from Amide, Cosmas, John, Jacob, Sergius etc.

6th century Simeon from Homs, St. Alipius, Theophilos the Confessor, Simeon of Cilicia, Agathus.

7th century John of Atareb, Zachary, Gabriel, Julian of Lydda.

8th century Ephrem of Kefr Tufa, Isaac Bar Maron, Lazarus, Simeon, Remban, Mari of Peet Chede.

9th century John IV who became Patriarch of Syrian Orthodox, Pacomius, Paul of Ain Fara.

10th century Butros of Hanak, Samuel son of Cyriac (Assyrian Church), Paul of Laodicia of Lebanon, Mary from Pontus.

11th century John near the Laura of St. Sabas, Gabriel, John the Sinaite.

12th century Abdon, Thomas the Cripple.

13th century A greek stylite, A Russian stylite.

- 15th century* Jacob in Upper Mesopotamia. Simeon and Thomas.
- 19th century* Seraphim of Sarov who died in 1833. A Georgian who died in 1848. An unnamed Stylite in Rumania is perhaps last on the list.

I learned some words in modern Syriac. As I go to the Assyrians often it is necessary to use some words or to understand the meaning of the conversations between the Assyrians which I patiently listen to without fully comprehending it. Some words which will be useful for my readers are reproduced below.

<i>Qal'a</i>	Fort
<i>Azad</i>	Free
<i>Doast</i>	Friend
<i>Jalde</i>	Early
<i>Beta</i>	Egg

The first four words are similar to the Hindi or Urdu words used in North India. Hindi and Urdu languages are similar but the script is different. Hindi is written in *Devanagiri* script and is written from left to right like English. The Urdu, however, is using something like Persian or Arabic script and is written from right to left like other Semitic languages.

The word *Beta* (egg) helped me very much. Way back in June 1977 when I was in Bagdad I wanted to explain that I have no problem in eating eggs, although I abstain from chicken and all other meat. I tried to show

the shape of the egg. Then I tried to make the sound of a chicken. All my dramatisation was on the way the egg laid by the hen and how she makes the whole world (mean the neighbourhood) know that she has done a great thing by laying an egg. I do not know such loud crowing as an announcement to the male member of the species that she has delivered an egg or to the owner to come and pick up the egg quickly before somebody claims it. When I was a lad I used to study my lessons near the chicken shed in order to hear the crowing of the hen so that I could rush and claim the egg first. In a large family like ours I had to be smart in order to get more eggs and to curry favour with my mother more than her other nine children.

The difference between old Syriac and modern Syriac is not much in the case of some words. For example *admaya* becomes *Qamaya* in modern Syriac because the letter *dalath* is silent. At the same time there are words which sound the same in the old and the new. For example *Bisra* means meat (flesh) and *mekhultha* means food. Some Assyrians tell me that I should not use *athieqa* and *hadtha* (old and new) instead I should say *sapraya* and *swadaya*. The word *sapraya* means literary and *swadaya* refers to the modern.

There is no difference in the names of months between the old and the new Syriac. For example

<i>Tiesan</i>	April
<i>Mayar</i>	May
<i>Tsieran</i>	June
<i>Shamus</i>	July

<i>Ab</i>	August
<i>IloI</i>	September
<i>Tishrin Qdim</i>	October
<i>Tishrin Hrai</i>	November
<i>Kanon Qdim</i>	December
<i>Kanon Hrai</i>	January
<i>Shvath</i>	February
<i>Adar</i>	March

In the following words I find no difference.

1. *Palgha* Half
2. *Resha* Head
3. *leda* Hand
4. *Libba* Heart

I found it useful to learn the words given below

<i>Koositha</i>	Hat
<i>Lakha</i>	Here

I have some words in brackets which are in the old Syriac. It is not much difficult for me to learn.

1. *Toop* Gun
2. *Unve* (inve) Grapes
3. *Shme'lee* (*Shimeth*) I heard
4. *Qana* (Qarna) Horn
5. *Soosie* (Soosia) Horse
6. *Ana* (Inna) I
7. *Bidyotha* (*Dyotha*) Ink
8. *Tarjoman* Interpreter

The importance of Syria in the history of the early head of Christianity is not properly understood by Christians today. Since Syria is a country of Muslim majority today, even scholars do not seem to realise the importance of Syria in the period prior to Prophet Mohammed.

Professor Peter Hofrichter of Salzburg University in Austria who was with us when we visited the places of historic importance in Syria refers to the prominent role Syria had played in the early centuries of Christianity. He writes in his book entitled *Paulus and die Anfänge of the Church in Syria* published in German language in Mainz and Linz in 1993.

“Today Damascus is a modern big city the capital of the Syrian state. But we are astonished how much there is still to be seen in its old city of the events narrated in the New Testament. There is the city door through which Paul had entered the town according to old tradition, the “Bab Sharki” on the eastern end of the Straight Street. In its present form it dates from the 2nd century but Paul saw it in still an earlier shape. Then there is Straight Street which still today leads from East to West through the city, partly as a narrow bazar. According to tradition the house of Judas stood on its Southern side, In the North-Western corner of the old city there was the house of Ananias. On its side we find a little church, dedicated to this first prominent Christian of Damascus, who had healed and baptized Paul after his conversion. It was erected in Christian antiquity on the foundations of a Roman temple. Today it is situated under the ground level.

CHAPTER 2

Tenth Trip To England

Pro-Oriente's Syriac Commission scheduled its 6th meeting in Vienna in the 4th week of February 1997. As I was getting out of India, I decided to make use of this opportunity to read some documents related to our Church in Lambeth Palace, London, and also in the University at Halle in Germany.

On 22 February 1997 I flew to Bombay and said Qurbana in the Methodist Centre Chapel in Byculla on Sunday the 23rd. On 25th my K. L. M. flight took off from Bombay to Vienna via Amsterdam. I had to predate my visa in the Bombay Consulate of Austria as the visa issued from the Madras Consulate of Austria was valid only from 26th. As it is not possible to stay up in the air for one full day I begged the officials in Bombay Consulate to pre date my visa by one day.

At the Consulate my first impression was that they would not listen to my frantic request. But one lady working in the Consulate was kind enough to listen me. She cancelled my visa and stamped a new one on another page of the passport. She was kind enough not to charge anything for this new visa as I had already paid more than Rs. 800 for the visa issued at Madras. The Madras Consulate issued the visa from the date shown on the invitation letter for the meeting in Pro Oriente.

My opinion is that the Consulates should not be fussy in fixing the number of dates for a visa. Sometimes it is better to reach one day early, although I usually arrive only right on time. In the previous meeting I had reached after the meeting had begun and a few minutes before my turn to present the paper.

I was able to visit my friend Ludwig Niestelberger and his wife again. I had spent some days with them during my first visit to Austria in June 1990. Helmut Braundle Falkensie from Modling had visited me that time to greet me on my 50th birthday. Therefore I decided this time to visit him as I had a day to spare. Although I did not speak German I managed to travel by bus to reach his apartment which was near to the Technical University in Modling which is a suburb of Vienna.

Vienna was cold. It was warmer than the previous year. In 1996 February it was around -3 celsius and in 1997 it was around +1 celsius.

The Pro Oriente's Syriac Commission to finalise the plan for the Chicago Syriac Consultation was scheduled for June 1997. This time I was happy to notice that my room was renovated. Special handles in the bath room and some luxury for comfort. I boasted to my friends that I was in room No. 1 which had special V. I. P. arrangements. Some friends just listened to me and did not exhibit their laughter at my ignorance.

One of them later told me that it was not a V. I. P. room. It is a room for handicapped persons. There is a new law in Austria that the conference centers and hotels should provide one or two rooms with special

handles in bath rooms for the convenience of the handicapped persons. Since there was no person in the handicapped category in Pro Oriente committee they were kind enough to assign that room to me.

As a result of this new information I decided not to brag about this V. I. P. room assigned to me. Nevertheless, I am mentioning it here for the benefit of other people who are equally ignorant like me about these special fittings for the handicapped persons.

On Sunday March 2nd I wanted to conduct Qurbana in Vienna for the Assyrian Christians scattered in the area. Although the Chaldean Catholics are many in Vienna I told that the Assyrians are few in number. That too are not in Vienna but scattered in the suburbs. There is no priest, but only a deacon.

I was advised to forget about arranging a Qurbana this time. I look forward to an opportunity in future when I visit Vienna to do Qurbana for the Assyrians in Vienna.

Archdeacon Yonan Y. Yonan of London used to visit this area for arranging Qurbana occasionally. Now I am told that Rev. Emmanuel Yohanna of Wiesbadan, Germany is in charge of this congregation in Austria where he conducts Qurbana once in two months. In his parish in Wiesbadan he has Qurbana only on alternate Sundays giving free time for him to travel to Stuttgart or Vienna.

Since the Assyrians in Europe are scattered it is difficult to organize regular parishes in all towns. Bishop Odisho, Bishop of Europe, shuttles between London and

Stockholm, Sweden and visits congregations in other countries in Europe. As our numbers are small and several of them are refugees only it will take years to establish regular congregations in this continent.

After my trip to Europe was concluded I received a letter from our congregation in Austria asking for three volumes of Hudra, the prayer book for the whole year in Aramaic language printed in Mar Narsai Press, Trichur, India. I do not know when will I get a chance to visit Vienna because both meetings of Pro Oriente for the year 1998 are scheduled to meet outside Austria. The meeting in March is going to be in Lebanon and the following meeting is scheduled to meet in Armenia in October. Thus I have no chance to be in Austria in 1998, maybe in 1999.

For the sake of the readers who may like to be in touch with the Assyrian congregation in Austria their address is given below. It is my hope and prayer that the scattered Assyrians will form some fellowship and strengthen this congregation.

Assyrian Church of the East
P. O. Box 10 Offense Fach
3500 KREMS/DONAU
AUSTRIA.

I wrote to His Holiness Mar Khannania Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East that I would like to photocopy the correspondence between the late Patriarchs of our Church with Anglican Church. I stated that I should not give trouble to the Patriarch to write to the Archbishop of Canterbury to

grant me permission to read in his Lambeth Palace Library. I offered to write to the Archbishop myself thinking that he might remember me. I have presented my humour books to him personally as I had done the same to his two predecessors.

Nevertheless, after writing to the Archbishop I began to wonder whether he would remember me or not as he had to meet thousands of bishops and Metropolitans being the Universal head of the Anglican communion. I was more than delighted when I got the following reply from Lambeth Palace dated 29 January 1997.

"Your Grace

The Archbishop of Canterbury has asked me to thank you very much for your letter of 4th January 1997.

It was delightful to hear from you since not only do I and the Archbishop have warm memories of meeting you in India in 1995 but also, when I was young undergraduate, I remember vividly enjoying Your Grace's hospitality when I, together with a party of young theologians from Keble College, Oxford, stayed with you in Trichur. Indeed, a cursory glance on the shelves beside me reveals your *Sacrament of the Church of the East* and also a copy of *The Liturgy of the Holy Apostles Adai and Mari* which you autographed for me.

I am sure that it will be possible for you to use the Library here at Lambeth though, with regard to your specific requests, it would be better if you were in direct contact with the Librarian,

Dr. Richard Palmer, to whom I am copying this letter. Perhaps you could be in touch with him?

If you are in London between the 10th and 20th of March, it would be very good to meet. Unfortunately I will be with the Archbishop in Jerusalem for much of the early part of that time but will be around here towards the end.

I look forward to hearing from you further."

Before I could write to the Librarian Dr. Richard mer, I got reply from the Library signed by Helenkely, Assistant Archivist. I always wish I could be t prompt in my correspondence. The following letter informative to other researchers too. Hence it is roduced below.

"Your Grace,

Your letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury has recently been passed to me to answer.

You are most welcome to visit the Library in March in order to research the Assyrian Church: I imagine that the records of most interest to you are the Archbishop's Assyrian Mission, Papers (list enclosed), and the papers of Canon J. A. Douglas, Honorary General Secretary of the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations, 1933-45. The collection contains much material for 1920-38, during much of which time Douglas edited The Christian East, and the index contains many references to the Assyrian Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church and related topics. When you

visit the Library you could also check for relevant material in the manuscripts series, our printed collections, and the papers of the Archbishops of Canterbury, which are available for study up to the end of 1966.

I enclose a leaflet on the Library for your information, and would be grateful if you would bring this letter on your first visit by way of introduction to my colleague in the reading room.'

On Sunday 2nd March 1997 I flew from Vienna to London's Heathrow changing my flight at Amsterdam. All KLM flights terminate at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport.

At around 7.20 p. m. our flight touched down in London. Archdeacon Yonan Youvel of London was there along with Eshaya Chemmani and my sister Sushila, her husband Dr. N. V. George and family. We proceeded to Eshaya's residence in Ealing as I had done in my previous trips after 1983.

After a few minutes of conversation I understood that they were waiting for somebody. To my pleasant surprise Bishop Odisho Oraham appeared there along with Qasha Esthapanose, priest of our Church in London. Although I had written to Bishop Odisho about my visit to London after Pro Oriente meetings I never expected him in England at that time. Bishop who is living at Norsborg near Stockholm in Sweden has his diocese of Europe covering ten countries.

Mrs. Khanna, wife of late Mr. Aprim Kellaitha, had passed away and the bishop had come to England in

er to officiate at her funeral to be held on the next
r. Mrs. Khanna was the sister of late Mar Yosip
ananisho Metropolitan and younger sister of Esther,
ther of late Patriarch Mar Eshaj Shimun. Khanna's
sband Mr. Aprim was the eldest son of Qasha Yosip
laitha, the great scholar who printed many liturgical
oks of our Church in Aramaic and taught hundreds of
syrians in Mosul, Iraq.

I had the good fortune of staying in their home at
Stephens Road in Ealing during December 1961 when
was a student in St. Boniface College, Warminster,
iltshire where I did the post-B. D. course of King's
llege, London. Rabbi Aprim had kept in touch with
e almost until his death. He loved me because I
longed to our Church in India where his father's cousin
e Mar Abimalek Timotheus had laboured hard during
08-1945.

Bishop Odisho regretted that he could not stay until
e following Sunday to attend my Qurbana, as he had
eady announced the ordination of a deacon as a priest
Sweden for the saturday 8th March. I had sweet
emories of Bishop Odisho's hospitality in his residence
Sweden in March 1996 when the temperature was -3
gree centegrade. We said good bye hoping to meet
the Synod in Chicago to be held on 19th to 30th June
s year.

On Monday March 3rd I started my research at
mbeth Palace Library. I stayed at St. Edward's House
the Great College Street next to the Westminster Abbey
hich is opposite to the British Parliament. I couldn't

recognize both these historic places although I had been there in 1961. Nevertheless, when I noticed tourist groups visiting the area memories came back to me.

My proposed plan was to go through the documents relating to our Church in the Lambeth Palace Library and make copies for preserving them in a central Archives of our Church. Since some of these letters are dating back to the end of the last century and the beginning of the present century the rules of library do not permit them to be copied by Xerox. But the library would arrange them to be microfilmed. The cost is one British Pound for two frames. I ordered several letters. My guess was that it would be about 500 frames which means £ 250. I calculated it as equivalent to Rs. 13,000. That is an exorbitant amount to Indian standards. Therefore I began to be stingy in marking letters for microfilming.

My search was limited to the 20th century which included letters of Patriarchs, Mar Ruvel Shimun (d. 1903), Mar Benjamin Shimun (d. 1918), Mar Poulos Shimun (d. 1920) and Mar Eshai Shimun (d. 1975). Actually we should microfilm the letters and other documents also of the past century. I hope that rich people or parishes can sponsor some document to be microfilmed and kept at the central archives at our Patriarchate.

During my research I stayed at the St. Edward House which is the mother house of the Society of St. John the Evangelist SSJE. I was delighted to find a group photo of the 1600th anniversary celebration of the Council of Nicea which was held in Canterbury in 1925 A. D. where the 18-year-old Patriarch of our Church

seated next to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Our Patriarch is the youngest in the rare company of many ecclesiastical dignitaries.

While staying at St. Edwards House I began to wonder whether Mar Timotheus Metropolitan had stayed in this house during his visit to England, in 1923. This thought intrigued me. But there was nobody old enough to remember who had stayed in that house 74 years ago. Finally after returning to Trichur I searched the biography of Mar Abimalek Timotheus which I myself had written. It is strange that I could not remember what I had written 2 years ago. Let me quote myself. P. 91.

"In August 1923 Mar Timotheus accompanied by Deacon C. J. Chacko sailed from Colombo and reached England by the S. S. Oxfordshire belonging to the Bibby line. They were taken to St. Edwards House at 22, Great College Street, in South West London. They stayed there for about eight months until they left for America, in April 1924."

Perhaps it was there Mar Timotheus Metropolitan, who was Regent to the Patriarch then arranged for the study of the young Patriarch in England. After Mar Timotheus had left England in 1924, the young Patriarch Mar Eshaj Shimun went to study in England during 1925-27, (one year at St. Augustine's College, Canterbury and one year at Westcott House, Cambridge).

Nobody is expected to talk while eating food in that place. Without realising this rule I opened my mouth to say that I do not eat meat like the Anglican monks with

whom I was eating. Fr. Charles told me that it was a silent supper. Hence I kept my mouths shut in the dining hall except to eat.

After supper we could go up and have coffee and talk in the common room for some time. It was an opportunity to get to know the priests living there.

Way back in 1962 when I was a student in England I got an opportunity to spend a few days with the Cowely Fathers in their mother house in Oxford. One day one Japanese student who was a guest like me knocked at my door. I reminded him the rules not to speak. He said that the rules were applicable only to the members and not to the guests. I advised him to talk in a low voice. Otherwise he would no more be a guest there.

On the three days beginning with the 3rd March 1997 at the Lambeth Library. I quickly copied some information about our Church from the files in the archives. I wrote without break from 10 a. m. to 5 p. m. I felt these facts and figures will be useful for the students of Church history.

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P. 311

In December (1899 or 1900) Mar Yonan Bishop of Uqri in Berwar died. The vacant diocese is absorbed with that of Mar Ishoyev of Duri.

P. 331 On 15 July 1900, Rev. D. H. Parry wrote to Canon Hutchinson

"For several years the relations of Browne to Surma, Mar Shimun's niece have been causing us much anxiety.

373-396

is an English translation of a letter dated 1 Tishrin 20, 1901 signed by Mar Savrisho episcopa, Qasha Oshana, Dea. Abraham, Pera Geevarghese, Qasha Elisha and Qasha Khoshaba Pera, addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury

they wrote:

It is now quite clear to us that the Russian Orthodox Church demands that we should abandon the ritual and service of our forefathers and adopt those of the said Russian Church. It is hard and unkind to ask us to abandon the church established by Mar Adai and Mari and to renounce its tradition....."

At the end of this petition they requested the Archbishop of Canterbury to his protection.

78. The Letter from Urmia, Persia dated 4 April 1898

"Since the murder of Mar Gawriel and the flight of the Christians from Nochea and Gawar there has only been one Bishop for the whole plain, namely Mar Yonan of Superghan, and he is now in Russia, negotiating for the establishment of the Russian Church here. The plain during the vacancy of see lapsed to the Matran, who since July has been in Persia, having made his escape from Qudshanis under the protection of our consul at Van"

226. 1897 A. A. M. Report. Appendix III.

"In 1896 there were only 2 scholars in English Mission but in 1898 there were 62. The highest

number of school was in 1893 (i. e., 107 schools) On June 5th 1905, W. H. Browne wrote to Archbishop of Canterbury in 1894. Mar Ruwel Shimun had planned to consecrate Archdeacon Dinkha as bishop for Malabar.

But Shamasha David set the Metran of Shmashdin against the scheme by working on his fears, that the new Metropolitan might return to be his rival in Hakiari."

He writes that the present Mar Shimun wants to send Qasha Awimalek as Metran to India.

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Letter of W. A. Wigram dated June 2, 1905 from Qudshanis states that he and Awimalek explained Mar Shimun about "*Qucunque Vult.*" Qasha Toma of Ashitha, theological tutor of Mar Shimun as well as Mar Shimun himself agreed with the statement. Mar Shimun said "Then the question is not one of Doctrine, for we are agreed in them; but of history. Just the question, Did Nestorius teach what you say he did, or Cyril what we say he did, and I really I think we can let these dead men sleep in their graves." Though he added, "I could not say that in Ashitha."

Ashitha is the stronghold of a clan who are very conservative doctrinally & turbulent politically. So you see, he quite falls in with your principle of "doctrines not men," and thinks the doctrinal questions by no means insolvable.

96. W. A. Wigram's letter to W. W. dated June 1905 received 29 June says Mar Shimun agreed to send a bishop. But he says refer to Wald's letter dated March 1 reaching Van April 5th "says he seems to think that I have a stock of bishops in my pocket."
97. W. A. Wigram asks in his letter
"What is the relation of the new man to the present bishop? Mar Augustino? Co-adjutor, Successor, or Superior?"
98. Copy of Mar Shimun's answer to the Christians in Malabar.

On Sunday 9th March I celebrated Holy Qurbana at . Mary's Church, Hanwell near Ealing. Those who had attended my 1983 Qurbana commented that this time was better than last time. Yes, I should show improvement after 14 years.

The sermon from the gospel was in English although did rest of it in Aramaic *lishana athieqa* which means d language.

At the reception in the Assyrian Church in Ealing which was the venue of the Qurbana in 1983 as we urchased the Church in Hanwell only in 1986 or 87) could meet some old friends like Deacon Bawai the etran, nephew of late Mar Yosip Khananishu Metro- politan. I also met new ones like the sister of Bishop ar Bawai Soro. Some old friends who attended my ssyrian Evening prayer way back in 1962 at S. Barnabas hurch in Ealing (when I was a young deacon of less an 22 years) had passed away, namely Rabbi Aprim

Kellaitha and his wife Khanna, Mr. Victor E. Wales the English man, Dr. O. R. Timothy, the Indian.

I was happy to meet Dr. Lazar, son of late Archdeacon Kaku Lazar, who was my *Malpan* (Teacher) in Thrissur, India in 1955-57. I couldn't recognize Dr. Lazar. He had taken me to a few places in Bagdad when I stayed in the house of Qasha Kaku Lazar in 1962 in the compound of Mar Zaia Church in Karadat Maryam which had been demolished some years ago. I had met Dr. Lazar's sister Maryam and mother, Yulia at Mar Sargis Church in Chicago in June 1996.

Every time I go to London; I notice some new things. I had never heard of a third airport in London. I had been to Heathrow and heard about Gatwick. This is the first time I went to a third airport namely Stansted which is close to Cambridge University. A renowned writer of travels and humour (I find something in common with him except that I am not renowned) Mr. Khushwant Singh wrote 20 years ago his observation regarding London. (*Around The World With Khushwant Singh* p. 21)

London is ever changing. One time it broke into a rash of milkbars; next time it was coffee shops; then steak houses, egg-and-chips or fish stalls, Italian trattoria and wine bars. This time Indo-Pakistan-Bangladesh restaurants. The reason for their sudden popularity were apparent everywhere. The pattern of visitors to London also changes every year. Americans are always there in large numbers but the Europeans come in rotation. One year it is the French; the next year it is the Dutch or the Germans. Two years ago the

Japanese outnumbered the Europeans. Now it is the Arabs. Not since the days of Caliph Omar have the Arabs spread with such lightning speed over the face of the globe, as they have in the last two years. Then it was with the scimitar; now it is with the petrodollar. And wherever they go they make mini-Arabistans. They don't like bland European food, so they patronise the spicier Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi fare.

The only sight-seeing I could do during my tour of land was the visit to Rugby school. I had been to by several times since 1977 as my sister's family lives at that town. But I never had a couple of hours to spare to take a tour of the Rugby school. My sister and I went to the school and paid £4 for two people to take the tour. They asked us to wait hoping somebody else would come so that the guide (who is a student there) could make some of her time worth her time she spends to show us around. Fortunately nobody turned up. Hence it was a special tour just for two of us. The attraction of the tour can be summed up in the words they advertised in their leaflet.

Visit Rugby School, birthplace of Rugby
Football, scene of Tom Brown's
Schooldays, home of the poet Rupert
Brooke and the School which educated
Lewis Carroll, author of Alice in
Wonderland. The School Museum tells
the story of Rugby, its people and its
famous game.

On Monday 10th March I was taken to Stansted airport near Cambridge. It is a new airport. When I reached the airport I realised that my flight to Amsterdam would be delayed. That means my connection to Germany from Amsterdam will be missed.

When I was worried about it I was told that U. K. Air which is in a business collaboration with KLM would fly me direct to Germany without taking me to Amsterdam. New tickets were issued by U. K. Air. Thus I flew from Stansted to Dusseldorf. From there a small aircraft of Eurowings took me to Leipzig. Thus the delay of two hours in departure from England did not affect my arrival time in Leipzig.

CHAPTER 3

Sixth Visit To Germany

Prof. Hermann Golz and Prof. Jurgen Tubach of the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenburg reached Leipzig airport in time. My flight had touched ahead of schedule. So the Professors did not have to wait to receive me. I was already there to receive them.

Prof. Jurgen Tubach teaches in the Theological Faculty and is in charge of the Seminar for Orthodox Churches. Prof. Hermann Golz is also in the Theological Faculty but is the head of the Institute for Historical Theology. Both are interested in the Assyrian Church.

Professor Tubach and his wife had met me when they came to the St. Ephrem's Ecumenical Research Institute (S. E. E. R. I.) in Kottayam, Kerala. Martin Luther University in Halle prepared a memorandum of understanding for recognizing the two-year M. A. course in Syriac for students to register for a doctoral research in Halle, Germany. There are plans for exchange of staff and students from Halle to S. E. E. R. I. in Kottayam.

Leipzig is the nearest airport for Halle. I have heard the name of Leipzig when I was a teenager because the Hudra (3 volumes of prayer book in Syriac) was printed here in 1886 A. D. We were using it in India until Hudra

of the Church of the East was printed in India in 1960. Leipzig is the leading name for printing books in Syriac language.

Staying with Professor Tubach was pleasant. His house in Halle is fully packed with books. Even they do not have a TV set. They have no time for such things. Their passion is learning and lecturing.

It was my sixth trip to Germany, the previous five visits were in June 1977, Sept. 80, Oct. 83, June 90 and June 94. But this was the first time I visited Germany in March. Hence it was very cold i. e., plus 3 degrees! That is better than minus 3 degree which I experienced in Vienna, Denmark and Sweden in Feb-March 1996.

About the Indians in Germany the observations made by the renowned Indian writer Khushwant Singh in 1978 are still valid. p. 169.

15000 Indians are living in Germany. More than a third of these are nurses from Kerala. There are almost a thousand doctors, engineers and scientists. Indian diplomatic personnel and others engaged in state enterprises account for almost 6,000. The number of students is no more than 300—and largely indebted to the munificence of the German Academic Exchange Service and the Alexander Von Humboldt Foundation. Since nurses from Kerala form the single largest group, cultural activities of Indians in Germany are largely Malayalam and Catholic-oriented. (There are half a dozen hospitals and old age homes entirely manned by Indian nurses.) This small

Indian community publishes six journals: *My World* in Malayalam, English and German; *Nadan Katha* in Malayalam is 10 years old; the other two are cyclo-styled sheets.

Halle (Saale)

The place of attraction in the city is the Franckeschen Stiftungen. There is a museum with a rare collection of articles and specimens collected by Francke. The portrait No. 148 is that of Bartholomaius Ziegenbalg, the first Lutheran who started mission work in South India. He with Plutschau were the founders of the Danish mission work in Tranquebar in 1706, which is the first Protestant mission work anywhere in India. I saw the first Tamil translation of the Bible preserved there.

A lot of buildings and schools were being renovated. Prof. Tubach suggested that we could hold the Symposium Syriacum of 2004 A. D. in the big hall in that building.

The next Symposium in 2000 A. D. has been already invited by Prof. Rafaat Ebied of the University of Sydney in Australia.

Francke Foundation is really impressive. It was a part of the university of Halle at the time of communist rule. Now it is independent and renovations are seen everywhere in the buildings indicating a restoration to its former glory.

The Director, an English lady, explained to me the activities of the Frankeschen Stiftungen and expressed a hope that a public lecture would be arranged if I would inform them about my future visit to Germany sufficiently early.

August Hermann Francke (1663-1727) was a German Pietist and educationist born at Lubeck. He started his career as a lecturer at Leipzig in 1685. He was appointed in 1692 professor in the newly founded University of Halle and pastor of Glauchan near Halle. In 1695 he started his famous Institutes now known as Franckesche Stiftungen. In 1696 he started Pedagogium and the orphanage. A publishing house and a dispensary were added. In 1713 the Prussian king Frederick William I visited there. The King's educational legislation shows the influence of Francke's works.

Dr. Johannes Lepsius had corresponded with our Assyrians in Persia in the beginning of the present century. The Archives kept in the University of Halle (Saale) has these letters preserved.

Prof. Golz showed me these letters and presented the copies of the same. Some are in Syriac only and some with German translation.

Mar Benyamin Shimun Patriarch's letter dated 1911 sent from Qudshanis, letters of Mar Aprem David, Bishop of Urmia are of interest to our Church. A list of documents given to me are given below.

Sender	Place	Date
1. Syriache Priester u. a.	Urmia/Dilgusha	1897/03/15
2. Sherin (?), Syrerin	Urmia	1898/10/01
3. Mar Johannes, Jacob Thomas men	Stockholm	1922/19/04
4. Mar Johannes, Jacob Thomas men	Stockholm	1922/10/02

5.	David Aphrem, Bischof von Urmia	Urmia	1913/05/15
6.	N. N.	„	1907/
7.	Mar Shimmon, Patriarch of the East	Qutshanis	1911/07
8.	David Aphrem, Bischof von Urmia (???)	Urmia	1911/07
9.	Batushua, Ilishua Shellu	„/Degalah	1907/11
10.	„ „ „	„/ „	1907/10/17
11.	„ „ „	„	1907/11/
12.	Ismael, David A.	Berlin	1909/01/04
13.	N. N.	Choi	1907/09/04
14.	Mirza, D.	Riehen b. Basel	1909/05/14
15.	ZZZ		
16.	Shimoonaya, Sleemoon	Urmia	1897/11/16
17.	Schimmonaya, Joseph	Berlin C.	1907/08/23
18.	Addai Scher	Seert	1905/12/09
19.	Mirza Scheked Ali Khan	Berlin W	1910/05/05

During my stay in Halle Syrian Orthodox monk Hanna ydeen was always with me. We visited also Wittenberg the place of Martin Luther. There I saw a painting of Martin Luther, the Reformer and hymn writer playing lute, most similar to Ud, the Arab musical instrument.

From Halle I went by train to BONN and visited the Mullers to meet Christopher and Jenny adopted from

Mar Timotheus Memorial Orphanage. I attended the mouth organ class which these two children were attending. Mrs. Agnes Freilinghaus, an active social worker, was teaching many children how to play a mouth organ.

During this visit I did not get time to see any historic place in Bonn or in Cologne. Actually I had seen both these cities in my previous tours. Bonn is well known being the capital city of Germany. But Cologne is more famous because of its beautiful Cathedral and other places of tourist interest.

Cologne is pronounced Koln in German language. It is only 34 Kms north west of Bonn. It lies 65 meters above sea level on the Rhine river. The city has an area of 400 sq. km.

Claudius the Roman emperor, founded this city of war veterans in 50 A. D. and named it after his wife Colonia Agrippina who was born in that area. She was the mother of Nero. Her name was shortened to Colonia and later Cologne in French and Koln in German.

The mighty twin spires of the Cathedral of Cologne were built in 1248 A. D. It is 515 feet tall visible from long distance. Many Roman Catholics from Kerala live and work in or around Koln. The city has about 30 museums and 120 art galleries.

From Bonn Mrs. Muller put me in a train to Frankfurt. At Dieburg, a suburb of Frankfurt, I visited Grunzweigs and Nicola Chitra, another adopted child from Trichur.

On 15th March our Assyrian priest in Wiesbadan, Mar Eshaya Emmanuel Khoshaba and Jack Davoud received me in Frankfurt. I instantly felt at home in the Assyrian company although I was meeting them for the first time. Mar Eshaya Emmanuel from Iraq speaks good English.

On Sunday, the 16th March I did Qurbana in our Mar Eshmun Bar Sabbae Assyrian congregation at Wiesbadan. We have no Church of our own. But the Roman Catholic Church has given a good Church for our own use. We conduct Qurbana on alternate Sundays as our only priest in Germany has other places to go. He is also conducting Qurbana in Vienna once in two months.

After I finished Qurbana at 12'O clock noon the priest told me that there was a baptism to be conducted and he was willing to do it himself if I were tired. But I was not tired as it was a cold country. In India I usually get tired if I do not eat till 12'O clock noon. Thus I was happy to do the baptism of a baby named George (same as my baptism name). It is the only baptism I have conducted outside India during my thirty foreign trips.

Benyamin Odisho, Noya Chamchoun, Jomiel David, Jack Davoud and others were happy to hear about the change in the name of late Mar Abimalek Timotheus which my mother donated her land. I stayed in the house of Jack Davoud whose wife told me in Assyrian language that she had received Holy Qurbana from my hands a few months earlier at Tell Tamer in Syria where she comes from.

Alberto Michael drove me to Stuttgart in the afternoon. We had an Assyrian gathering and *Kha ramsha* (Supper)

there too. Many photos were taken. After staying overnight in an Assyrian home I was put in the train to Munchen the next day.

At Munchen Mrs. Brigitte Huber and Paul Huber had adopted Saritha and Thomas Aprem from Trichur. I had given my name to the boy when I baptised him in Trichur before he went to his adopted home in Germany.

Diane Leukert and her adopted son Timothy Paulson came to see me. Msgr Dr. Wald Muller, the ecumenical Ordinary of the Archbishop of Munich came to meet me. I attended St. Patrick's Day celebration with Irish guests in the handicapped children's home where Mrs. Brigitte Huber was teaching a few lessons. She had earned a Master of Theology degree from the Munchen University and recently she was ordained to perform priestly duties in the Lutheran Church.

On the way to the airport Dr. Hubert Kaufhold joined us. He is an honorary professor of Canon Law in Munich. Though a Catholic layman he is translating the codification of Canon Law of Mar Abdisho of Suwa (d. 1318) from Syriac to German.

During my stay in Germany I missed the daily newspapers. I read six newspapers daily in India. It is difficult to obtain newspapers in English in Germany. Even German newspapers are not read by German people as we do Malayalam or English newspapers in India. The Indian newspapers are cheaper than the cheapest newspaper abroad. The cheapest outside India is *The Herald* of Zimbabwe which is only Rs. 8, which is much

higher than all the English and vernacular dailies in India. The cost of some costly newspapers are given below in ascending order.

1. <i>Tagas Anzeiger</i> (Switzerland)	Rs. 50
2. <i>Denmark</i>	„ 49
3. <i>Dagenshyketer</i> (Sweden)	„ 46
4. <i>Frankfurter</i> (Germany)	„ 42
5. <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>	„ 25
6. <i>The Independent</i> (U. K.)	„ 23
7. <i>The Straits Times</i> (Singapore)	„ 15
8. <i>Kompas</i> (Indonesia)	„ 10

Not only the cost but also the time factor is important for foreigners. Since they know the news from the TV and radio (even while they are driving) they are not keen to purchase newspapers daily. In India we can get a portion of the cost (between 25% and 50%) of these newspapers by selling the used newspapers for wrapping the goods, which the shops sell.

In foreign countries nobody uses the old newspapers. There are beautifully printed plastic or paper bags for this purpose. The consumerist crazy society in India is now wrapping it.

Before I conclude my report on my visit to Germany I will be less honest if I do not share my thought with my readers that was agitating my mind. Many of my well wishers express their mind against mentioning it. But what I want to achieve by mentioning it is a change of heart for the better. We should not condemn others who do not agree with us totally on some issues.

When I visited Germany in 1983 some Assyrians in Frankfurt did not like it as I did not belong to the new Gregorian calendar group. I was following the old Julian calendar. I was in Germany in order to read paper at the conference of the Oriental Canon Law which was held in 1983 in Freiburg, Germany. I kept away from the Assyrian Church politics.

It was therefore an unpleasant surprise to me when I received the following letter from the Assyrian Youth of Frankfurt, Germany.

ASSYRISCHE JUGEND VEREINIGUNG. e. V.

6000 - Frankfurt/M

Postfach: 2379

Mr. Aprem,

Now we know what kind of stupid person you are.

Where you got the title "Doctor of Theologie"?

It looks for us Assyrian people of America and Europe that the same stupid people as you are one gave it to you.

We the Assyrian Union ask you: from whom you got the money to go to Baghdad, to London and America?

In the name of our Assyrian Church, even you are not Assyrian but Indian? Never in history an Indian has been a bishop of our Assyrian Church.

There is no necessity to write to somebody as you a long letter.

Only we want to let you know that the Assyrian Union will be very happy to hear when you are in Europe or Germany. Then we shave your beard and put it in your pocket."

It is not necessary to aggravate the antagonism by commenting on the contents of this venomous letter. I began to examine my conscience whether I deserve such mischievous verdict from some Assyrian youth whom I never met.

Ever after this event whenever I went abroad my mother enquired whether it was near the people who threatened me about shaving off my beard. Salman Rushdie has to be afraid of the *Fatwa* of the Iranian leaders. The British government has to spend millions of British Pounds to protect him from the ire of his Islamic enemies.

Personally I prayed to the Lord to protect my beard from my unknown enemies. Therefore I kept away from Assyrians during my two trips to Germany in June 1990 and June 1994 after this *Fatwa*.

Now in March 1997 when I was invited by the University in Halle my preference was to finish my research in the University and not to meddle with Assyrian politics." Anyhow I took the risk to accept the hospitality of the Assyrians and say Qurbana for them.

"They are not among us now. Those Assyrians of 1983 migrated to America. Or they may have changed loyalty to the Old Calendar group. Do you want to meet them?" one Assyrian asked me. "No, never," replied I thanking God for the beard which was still untouched even 14 years after the threat.

These thoughts are expressed here for not to revive an old controversy. But to see how uncharitable we are.

in making judgement about others whom we do not like. If some of those Assyrians who wrote that letter happen to read these words now, let us hope that they would take it in the real Christian love.

The following words from the well known chorus ring in my ears :

"And they'll know we are Christians by our love
by our love

Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love."

Another city in Germany where Assyrians live is Berlin. I had visited Berlin in 1980 after the 3rd Syriac Symposium which was held in Gottingen, Germany. Dr. Gabriele Yonan is a German scholar who wrote on *Assyrians Today* in German language. Since she had been to Trichur to meet me she invited me to visit Berlin. I had only one day visit. I knew there are several Assyrians in Berlin. But I think that they are not well united to form a strong Assyrian congregation.

As I was in Halle I knew that there are only 2 hours by train to Berlin. The university in Berlin has manuscripts in Syriac. But there was no time to go and look at the books in Oriental department of the University. I wish in future I will have an opportunity to visit Berlin again after my only visit there which was in 1980. There will be a lot of changes then. Berlin wall (fence) that separated East Germany from West Germany where I had stood in 1980 is no more there. The united Germany has its own problems as the people in the East Germany were poorer compared to the affluent in the West Germany.

CHAPTER 4

In Amsterdam

When I changed my ticket Frankfurt to Amsterdam to Munich to Amsterdam I thought I would have to pay for the extra distance. Nevertheless the KLM people were very considerate. They did not charge any extra for this change.

In 1996 when I passed through Amsterdam while returning after visiting our Church in Sweden I had to pay inside the airport as I did not take visa of Benelux countries. That visa was for three countries namely Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg. My readers, I hope, are not like the lady at New York's Kennedy International airport who refused to give me boarding pass to my New York-Amsterdam flight because my Benelux visa entitled me to enter Netherlands, but not Holland. Even when I told her that Holland is another name for Netherlands she was slow to listen to me. That was way back in 1977.

In 1997 I could go to Amsterdam with a visa issued by the German Consulate in Madras, India because the new agreement signed by the Benelux countries as well as Germany, France, Portugal and Spain at a town called Schengen in Holland entitles us to visit all of the Schengen countries with a Schengen visa issued by one

of those seven countries. (Now in October 1997 a new agreement includes Italy also into this fellowship). My personal wish is that we should be able to visit whole Europe with one visa.

In the Amsterdam airport I walked without immigration control because we were flying from Munich in Germany. If I were flying from Bombay, not only the immigration control is strict but also the big dog snuffing for drugs too would have been there as in the previous tour.

When I reached the arriving hall at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport, I saw Atee and Ali Duyn waiting for me along with their adopted son David. Since I had been there twice before David was familiar to me. They were happy to see me. They drove me to their home at Eefde which was about two hours drive.

Since I had less than one-and-a-half day before returning to India, I could not visit the other child adopted from the same orphanage in Trichur by Peter Ultee. Since they live in Aardenburg which was in another direction I could not go to see them as I did in 1988 when I went to Louvain University in Belgium to attend the Syriac Symposium. Actually Peter Ultee had come to Louvain and had driven me to Aardenburg. In my visit to Holland after 1988 which was in June 1994, I had to be satisfied with Eefde and not Aardenburg.

Dr. Bernard Peters was another friend I wanted to visit. I had dinner with him in the previous visit. But in this visit there was no time. There was rain also. Actually he was staying not far from Eefde. He was my

ighbour in our childhood days in Trichur. He became doctor of animals and after going to Germany began tourse the bones of human beings. I became a doctor of uls of humans.

Another family I had visited in 1980 as well as in 83 near Amsterdam is that of Shmouel Ibrahim I telephoned to him in June 1994 and he told me that I was welcome to his home. The two small girls I had met in 80 and 1983 have grown big; he says.

On Thursday 20 March 1997 I telephoned to the KLM office in Amsterdam to reconfirm my return flight as it is compulsory that we re confirm our flights after reaching a new country usually 72 hours prior to the departure. Here I didn't have 3 days. When I re confirmed the flight I had to tell them ticket number and some details they ask. I took out the ticket from my pocket. After finishing the reconfirmation by phone I put my ticket back. I guess one upon which is essential for my flight from Amsterdam is probably detached from the main ticket.

On Friday 21 March 1997 Atee Duyn took me to the railway station near to Eefde and put me in the express train going to Schiphol airport. I thought it was convenient. Because in the previous trip the traffic was thick on the way to the Airport and we were about to miss the flight. This time the train will not be slowed down by the road traffic. Still for some reason the train was late in arriving the Schiphol railway station.

On the railway platform was a trolley. I pushed it up the escalator straight to the check-in counter. How convenient. In many airports the train stations are very

far. It will be convenient if railway stations are built next to the airport.

I rushed to the counter to get my boarding pass. I was told that one coupon was missing from my ticket jacket. I searched my pocket for the missing coupon. Anticipating my worry she said "Don't worry, you go to another section and request for a duplicate coupon and come back to me. When you come back don't wait in the queue again. You will miss your flight." I rushed to another counter and obtained a new ticket without paying anything. I rushed back and without waiting in the queue went to the lady who had attended on me earlier and waited to finish her work with the customer she was serving.

But there is another lady like a policewoman not to let any customer to jump the queue. She came to me and told me that I had to go back to the long queue. I knew that I would miss the flight if I obeyed her orders. I told her that her colleague had asked me to go straight to her. Fortunately my statement was corroborated by the kind lady and I could get my boarding pass in time.

After visiting David adopted by Atee & Ali Duyn I concluded this trip. My reservation from Amsterdam to Bombay was still in the waiting list even after four weeks. Hence I flew to Dubai. There I was given a boarding Pass of the Emirates flight to Bombay.

From Bombay I flew to Cochin and by car to Trichur to reach there to lead *Ramsha* (evening) prayers on the eve of *Oshana* at the Marth Maryam Cathedral. This was my 29th Oshana (Palm Sunday) since I became Metropolitan. I never missed an Oshana in Trichur in all these years.

CHAPTER 5

Mumbai To Chicago

On 17th June night i.e., early morning of Wednesday June 18th 1997 my journey commenced from Mumbai International airport. The Korean Air was bound to Seoul via Bangkok.

Around 7 a. m. in Bangkok we reached that airport after flying for about $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours. It was only 5.30 a. m. in my watch. India is $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours behind Thailand. We did not want to get out of the aircraft. But we were forced to move out for one hour. It was cleaning-up operation for many of the transit passengers who created a long queue near the wash rooms.

We were not keen to go to the restaurant for refreshments, as we had enough and more in the aircraft. We were about to get a good breakfast as we got into the aircraft again. Hence I injected my daily insulin in anticipation of the breakfast I was about to receive. It was wise to wait till we got into the aircraft as I was not sure about what time we would hear the announcement to get into the aircraft. Many unusual delays are usual in these journeys. It is convenient to open your suitcase and take out insulin bottles etc in the transit lounge rather than in the aircraft. The space is limited in the aircraft. In the

first class there is more leg space but in the economy class there is only just enough space for legs and hands.

After a halt of one hour we continued our flight to Seoul, Korea in the same aircraft. At Seoul we had to change into a new flight with a separate boarding pass. I do not recall how much was the flight time from Bangkok to Seoul, may be four hours or more.

The flight time from Seoul, Korea to Chicago, U. S. A. was 12½ hours. It was a non-stop flight. We crossed the time barrier over Japan. Thus we left Korea on Wednesday 18th June and reached the same day in the U. S. A. Some passengers adjusted their watches. I didn't do it. Because I knew that I have to change back again when I return, to add one day when we cross the time-barrier over Japan.

At Chicago's Ohare airport which is the busiest airport in the world (London's Heathrow is the second), Bishop Aprim Khamis was waiting for me with Shamasha Dadway. Some people pronounce his name as That Way. But Deacon tells me the truth that his name is Dhaved and somebody spelt it as Dhadway. Our priest in Denmark is Albert Phaneemon. I asked him whether it was Philemon. He said, "No, it is Benyamin or Benjamin. But somebody spelt it Phaneemon and it stayed."

I was taken to Morton Grove, a suburb of Chicago where Mar Aprim Khamis and His Holiness the Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV live. Later I was taken to the house of Mrs. Juliet Rehana Kasha where Bishop Poulouse Mar Poulouse and myself were to stay.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not record a word of appreciation to this teacher who had helped the Mar Motheus Charitable hospital in Trichur. We got 5-star treatment in the residence of this widow. Her 85-year-old mother also took care to see our stay was comfortable. She helped me to read evangelion in modern Syriac for church service. She had a New Testament always near her. Juliet's both sons, Athor and Ramson, also went to our comfort during our stay in the home. Juliet's mother passed away a few days after my stay in her home.

This Synod was the sixth synod after His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV came to the headship of our Church more than 20 years ago (17 Oct. 1976). But for Mar Poulose and I it was the first one. But we never felt strangers or late comers. We were one in the spirit with a desire to face the challenges of the 3rd millennium, in the context of the ecumenical dialogues.

The Pro Oriente's 3rd Syriac Consultation (July 8-11) was a great experience. The joint Communique released on the final day tells about the positive outcome. In addition to the members of the Syriac Commission like Bishop Mar Bawai Soro and myself, there were observers like Amba Bishoi, Metropolitan and emissary of Pope Shenouda of the Coptic Church in Cairo. Representing the Church in Alexandria Amba Bishoi is critical of the Assyrian Church (nicknamed Nestorian) which uses some negative adjectives to Cyril of Alexandria (the leader who condemned Nestorius in 431 A. D.). We announced that our holy Synod decreed to remove all such "prayers" from our liturgical books. I reiterated in the Pro Oriente meeting that God would not be pleased by our condemnations and our prayers with evil desires would not be

answered. Let us hope that other churches will also omit such condemnation.

It was my privilege to conduct Holy Qurbana in five different Churches in the U. S. A. during the visit of 4½ weeks. May I list them in the chronological order.

- June 22 Mar Sargis Church
 1850 W Cuyler, Chicago, 60613
- „ 29 Marth Maryam Church
 660 Larson Lane
 Rosalle, Illinois 60172
- July 6 Mar Gewargis Cathedral
 7201 N. Ashland
 Chicago 60626
- „ 13 St. Thomas Church
 120 Cabot St.
 New Britain. Ct 06053
- „ 20 Marth Maryam Church
 6903 Rodford Ave.
 North Hollywood, Calif 91605

Words are not sufficient for me to record how grateful I am to all the priests, deacons and committee members and choir members.

In Mar Sargis Church I was happy to meet Julia widow of my Syriac Malpan late archdeacon Kaku Lazar. She is a grand daughter of Malik Ismaiel of Tiari who was a top lay leader of the Assyrian Church in the beginning of this century. She was staying with her younger

daughter Alexandra who took me to her house after turbana. Alexandra's elder sister Mariyam was also very much active the whole week to give a ride to bishops and to serve at the table. The sister in between these two also came to meet me. I have met all of them when I had stayed with my teacher while he was Qasha at Mar Zaia Cathedral in Karrada't Maryam, Bagdad in 1962. Now they look different after 35 years.

When I talked to my friends that I used to weigh 82 Kgs and now I weigh 70, a friend asked "Bishop, are you really 70? You look only 65." He did not know that I was talking about my weight and not my age. Now my American readers ask me how much is 70 Kgs in pounds. Yes, Indians used to measure in pounds. Some years ago we got converted to Kgs. 70 Kg is equivalent to 154 lbs. For a normal man of 5½ ft height 70 Kgs is more than what is required. 3 or 4 Kgs less will be more ideal. I am not 5½ ft exactly. I am only 5ft and 5½ inches.

To be honest I must admit that although by strict control and some physical exercise I had brought down my weight to 70 Kg from my obesity of 82 Kgs. In recent years some 3 Kgs got added to my weight. In spite of the fact that I strictly abstain from milk, eggs, fish etc in the lent season of 50, 25 and 3 days, this extra Kg of unwanted weight refuses to disappear. I know the reason. The lack of physical exercise. If I walked 3 or 4 miles daily, this unwanted flesh would disappear, melting all the extra fat in my body. It is a sad thing of life. We know the remedy, but do not practise until it becomes imperative.

Vicar of Mar Sargis Church Rev. Athanasius Yousif is now raised as a cor-episcopa since I met him in 1996. He was the priest of our parish in Yonkers, New York when I met Bishop Aprim Khamis in May 1977. It was my first meeting with Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis. That was my first visit to the U. S. A. after I had become a bishop in Bagdad in September 1968.

Rev. Athanasius Yosip accompanied Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis when we talked about the possibility of the re-uniting the followers of both old (Julian) calendar and new (Gregorian) calendar. Late Deacon Dr. C. J. Chacko Ph. D. with his wife Dr. Dorothy Chacko M. D. and Mathew Chakola, a young Engineer from Trichur now living near Washington D. C. were accompanying me in the talks.

As promised in that return journey from the USA I stopped in Bagdad in June-July 1977 but my mission for unity in our Church did not materialise. Yet I am glad that 11 years later in November 1995 in God's own appointed time the unity became a reality at least in India. As for the other countries such as Iraq it is my prayer God will give unity to the ancient Church which presented innumerable number of martyrs and saints.

The Mar Sargis Church was full. Three Metropolitans and three bishops were present for that Qurbana. It is an impressive record for any parish. After Qurbana there was a reception and breakfast in the hall. I was able to meet some friends whom I had met when I did Qurbana on the 'Friday of gold' (*eroovtha d' dahva*) in May 1996 in that Church.

Adopted Children

On Saturday 28th June the Indian children got together in a restaurant in Chicago to meet me. These children adopted from the Mar Timotheus Memorial orphanage in Trichur. It was a pleasure for all of them, to meet me. On my side it was my pleasant duty to greet them individually, as my mother Mrs. J. D. Mookan had taken care of them when they were tiny babies. She took care of these babies and spent sleepless nights till she found for them parents abroad who were willing to adopt them.

John and Annie were adopted by Paul and Eleanor Thomasulas in Chicago. John is in 8th grade and Annie in 9th grade. Being an author myself I was delighted to read the short story which John had authored. He was given prize at the young Authors convention of the State of Illinois. Annie is also a smart girl.

In my travelogue *Washington to New York* published in 1992 I had quoted from the letter of Thomasulas to me. About John they wrote P. 53.

“Last March his illustrated story “Emergency Vehicles” was selected from his first grade room for Young Authors Contest. As an avid reader, he learns new information and then quizzes us about it at most inconvenient times. John uses his artistic talent to draw dinosaurs and clever story pictures.”

I am glad that John had laboured hard during the last five years to improve the God-given talents.

Another was Rina adopted by Dr. Primal De Lenerolle a professor in the Medical Department in the University of Illinois. Rina was the youngest of the adopted children abroad. Professor Primal hails from Sree Lanka. His wife is an American. They are happy with their only child Rina adopted from our orphanage. She is a smart girl. She too had written a story and gave me to read it.

Mary and Alice came to this gathering long way from Waterloo, Iowa. Mary was the first child to be adopted abroad from the M. T. M. Orphanage. Then Polly Reuling adopted another girl from the same place. That was Alice. When I first went to their home in Minneapolis in 1988 Alice was scared, as she was only 2 years or so.

Now Mary Mariam Margaret Reuling graduated from Shattuck- St. Mary's School in Faribault, Minnesota with good grades in the 139th commencement of that school. As she had good grades she did not have much difficulty in getting admission in Macalaster College, Minnesota. I hope and pray that Mary will grow in wisdom and maturity and fulfil God's plan in her life. It is indeed a contrast from her beginnings in the orphanage in Trichur. In our prayer books we often pray for the widows and orphans.

After the Holy Synod I was able to visit the Reulings in their home in Waterloo, Iowa. I was hoping to visit them after my visit to their home in Minneapolis in 1988. Since then Reulings had moved to Waterloo after the death of Dr. Reuling, father of Polly.

In Waterloo to my great surprise I saw the name "Dr. Thomas Mulakan M. D." at the Doctors' office.

I looked again in utter disbelief. I was under the impression that Waterloo is a place where the Keralites (people from Kerala State) had not penetrated. It is humourously stated that the ubiquitous Keralites had climbed even the Himalaya mountain's highest peak Everest. The gossip columnists say that Hilary saw the omnipresent Keralite running a tea shop in that highest peak of the world covered with snow. The reference here is not to Hillary Clinton, but to Colonel Hilary who was the first to conquer Everest. To avoid trouble of the readers quizzing for the meaning of the word ubiquitous I must state here that it means omnipresent or present everywhere.

The name Mulakan is a Keralite name. It must be from my home town, Trichur. "I think, I know that Doctor," I boasted. "Are you sure, is this the same person?" queried Mary Reuling. "I think so" was my reply which did not sound as sure as it was in the beginning.

It is not polite to gatecrash into a doctor's office without prior appointment. If it is not the same person known to me in India, being a neurologist he can recommend me to get admitted in hospital. Mary suggested that we could walk into his office and make sure whether it was the same person whom I had taught in Sunday School 32 years ago when I was 15 and he was perhaps 10 or 11. There was no much difference in age between the teacher and the taught in that Sunday school class when I started teaching for the first time in 1955.

When I reached near his door I began to hesitate. If I were not an educated man I could make mistake without thinking of the formalities of fixing up the appointment. If it were the same Dr. Thomas whom I was thinking of I could somehow face him. If it is a different person I will cut a sorry figure when I knock at his door and walk in without appointment.

A joke in my latest book *HOLY SMILE* was about an uneducated priest going to meet his own bishop. He saw the board outside bishop's room "No admission without permission". He opened the door and walked inside. When he approached the annoyed bishop he demanded "Why did you enter my room without permission?" The scared priest said "I entered inside in order to take permission from you."

Dr. Thomas Mulakan M. D., M. R. C. P. was attending to a patient when he saw my bearded face. He was pleasantly surprised to see me in an unexpected corner of the world. He would not believe his eyes. I was not even aware that he was in this area. Twenty years ago when I was visiting my sister in Rugby, England he was doing his M. R. C. P. in England. Later I had attended his wedding reception in Trichur, where Dr. M. D. Thomas M. D. married another M. D. The first M. D. stands for his initials Mulakan David. The family name first and father's name second. I too was an M. D. once, Mookan Devassy George. Recently I had heard that Dr. Thomas had settled in New York area.

"Waterloo is better than New York for practice," says Dr. Thomas. Less competition and less tension.

His wife and daughter live in their home near New York. Dr. Thomas is planning to practice both in Iowa as well as in New York, if he gets an assistant. He says that stock market business is more lucrative than practising medicine even in the U. S. A. Generally there is an impression that doctors and nurses in the U. S. A. make more money than others. The million dollar question is 'Is hundred thousand dollars an year enough for a comfortable living in this consumerist society?'

There was one more girl in our last get-together in Chicago. Margaret called Kala could not make it this time. She is adopted by Parry family in Peoria, some miles far from Chicago. I had not been able to visit them owing to my tight schedule. The Parrys have a boy named Ryan adopted from another orphanage in India. They grow as brother and sister in the Parry family. Because both are Indian born. They do not know any Indian language. When these children grow up in an American family, English is their mother tongue. Their biological mother's tongue is a foreign language to them.

On June 29 I celebrated Holy Qurbana in the Marth Maryam Church in 660 Larson Lane, Rosalle, Illinois 60172. This brand new Church was opened only on 21 June. On 22nd June Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha V had celebrated holy Qurbana there. I considered it an honour to be invited to celebrate holy Qurbana on the following Sunday. There was a large crowd. The Church was filled to full capacity.

There was a breakfast at the hall afterwards. Eleanor Thomasula, Polly Reuling, Mary and Alice had come to

attend the service. My sister Leela's daughter Asha with her American husband Paul Furlow also were there. Last year when I celebrated in Mar Geevarghese Church Asha and Paul had attended along with my sister Leela Alex.

The altar of this Church was scheduled to be consecrated later on August 15 1997 by two Patriarchs (H. H. Mar Dinkha IV and H. H. Mar Raphael Bidawid of the Chaldean Catholic Church) along with other bishops and archbishops. Since I was to be back to India in July itself I was sorry to miss that historic occasion. Therefore doing service with portable altar (*dappa*) was some consolation.

The six-acre plot of this church is very spacious. Only 3 acres are cleared for the Church, hall, parsonage and car park. They could use the remaining area to construct a patriarchate and a seminary or keep the trees to keep them to balance ecology as our fore fathers had done in bygone centuries.

Visit to Asha's apartment in down town Chicago provided me with a few hours in a relaxed mood. Asha showed her computer. Although I did not know how to operate a computer or internet or world wide web code, I told her to press the buttons for the Assyrian Church of the East in the internet. As she did I was delighted to see the picture of our Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV and lot of information about our Church. I am amazed at the wonderful possibilities of the internet.

Holy Synod

The event of a historic and ecumenical consequence taken in this Holy Synod is regarding the relationship

between the Assyrian Church and the Chaldean Catholic Church, a separation created in 1552 A. D. at the time when John Sulaqa was consecrated as the Patriarch of the Chaldeans by the Pope of Rome. After 444 years the leaders began to think of coming closer again.

***6th Synod of the Holy Apostolic Catholic
Church of the East and of the Assyrians
under the leadership of His Holiness
Mar Dinkha IV Catholicos Patriarch***

23 June to 1 July, 1997

Morton Grove, Illinois, U. S. A.

The Holy Synod of the holy, Apostolic, Catholic Church of the East and of Assyrians commenced from Monday 23 June to 1997 at 11 a. m. in the city of Chicago, Illinois under the Chairmanship of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV Catholicos Patriarch. The hierarchy present were

1. His Grace Mar Narsai de Baz, Metropolitan of Lebanon and all Europe and Syria, Patriarchal Deputy.
2. His Grace Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of India.
3. His Grace Mar Geevarghese, Metropolitan of Iraq.
4. His Lordship Mar Sargis, Bishop of Bagdad.
5. His Lordship Mar Poulose Poulose, Bishop of Trichur
6. His Lordship Mar Aprim Khames, Bishop of Eastern U. S. A.
7. His Lordship Mar Bawai Soro, Bishop of Seattle and Secretary of CIRED.

8. His Lordship Mar Meelis, Bishop of Australia & New Zealand Secretary of the Holy Synod.
9. His Lordship Mar Ammanuel, Bishop of Canada.
10. Archdeacon Yonan Youvel of the diocese of Europe
11. Archdeacon Geevarghese Athniel of the diocese of Syria

Letter of His Grace Mar Timotheus Mefropolitan and Patriarchal Representative to the Church of the East in India was read. He regretted his inability to be present owing to old age and difficulties of travel.

Mar Geevarghese Cathedral

On 6th July I celebrated Qurbana in Mar Geevarghese Cathedral in 7201, North Ashland, Chicago 60626. It is one of our biggest Churches in the world. In addition to the office of the Vicar Rev. Shleemon Hesqiel, there are offices for Rev. Charles Klutz (Chancellor), Archdeacon Aprim De Baz and Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis in this big building.

In June 1996 I had conducted Qurbana in the Cathedral. So it was my second opportunity to celebrate in this Church which has a good choir also. Actually the holy synod met in this church for two days. But the hall we were meeting had no air conditioner. Chicago was above 90° fahrenheit which was hot for most of us, even to Indians who had experienced above 100°.

After Qurbana Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis went down to basement to explain to the congregation the Synodical decrees passed that week.

I was sitting with the deacons eating breakfast. When I came out of the Church a lady who had her baby baptised that day in that Church asked the deacon who I was. He replied he is our Metropolitan from India. She asked, "Is he from our Church?" "Of course", clarified the deacon. "In that case can my baby and I have a photograph with the Metropolitan?". I obliged. She was happy to have a photo with this unknown bishop.

David Oomen came to Mar Geevarghese Cathedral to take me to his house to give me a good Kerala dinner before taking me to Pro Oriente's Syriac Consultation at Mundelein, suburb of Chicago. David Oomen's wife Lalitha is the sister of my brother-in-law Cherian Puthicote known as Thambi. David Oomen is called Achenkunju. People in southern part of Kerala usually have two names. So it is very confusing to a person like me because most people in our area in Kerala have only one name.

Westerners too have sometimes a second name. But it is often abbreviations of the actual name. Thomas is Tom, Timothy is Timmy, Robert is Bob, Jefferson is Jeff, Jonathan is Jon, Joseph is Joe, Charles becomes Charlie. That is easy to remember. Before women get angry let me mention some feminine names Jacqueline becomes Jackie, Frances is Fanny, Katherine is Kathy, Juliana is Julie, Elizabeth is Liz etc. Yes everybody knows Diana is Di. But that is not for every Diana.

One has to be careful before we use abbreviation or nickname. When the archbishop of Canterbury (Michael Ramsay) came to India to attend 3rd assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi in Nov. 1961, an American photographer called Archbishop of Canterbury "Archie."

Some Indian friends gathered for supper in the house of Achenkunju. Their daughters Sanju and Premu were there. Sanju is going to join Law school. Indian boys and girls are generally good in their studies and becoming even lawyers in America. Of course, there are plenty of engineers, doctors and nurses among the Indians working in India.

Last time I met Sanju and Premu was at the wedding of my nephew Verghese George of England which took place in India in Dec. 1996. Their parents had not come to India at that time. But I met them for the wedding of my niece Asha Alex which I had solemnised in Columbus, Ohio in U. S. A. in July 1995.

Columbus, Ohio

During my stay in Chicago I informed my sister Leela Alex that I would not get time to make a short visit to Columbus, Ohio where she lives. Instead of me going, she can come to Chicago to meet me. Finally I found less than 48 hours to visit Columbus. Her son Dr. Saji Alex of Indianapolis arranged my ticket on his computer. He gave some number to me. While flying from Chicago's Midway airport as well as while returning from Columbus, Ohio I didn't carry any air ticket. It was nice of my nephew Dr. Saji to drive to Columbus with his wife Dr. Sonia and daughter Briana Amitya.

At Columbus, Ohio I was able to have dinner in the home of Sebi Paul Nadakavukaran. I was also happy to meet his parents N. I. Paul and Lizzy from Kozhikode, Kerala who were on a six-month-visit to their sons living in the U. S. A.

CHAPTER 6

New Britain to Hollywood

New Britain

In May 1996 when I did Qurbana at the Assyrian Church in Yonkers, New York, the priest of St. Thomas Assyrian Church in New Britain, Connecticut came to invite me to his parish. As I did not have time to spare I promised to do it in 1997 when I was supposed to go to Chicago to attend the Holy Synod. When I began to make final travel plans to the U. S. A. for the Synod I found it difficult to make a visit to New York as my flight to the U. S. A. was direct to Chicago instead of via New York.

When I first flew to the U. S. A. in 1966 most of the international flights were through J. F. Kennedy international airport in New York. J. F. Kennedy airport was a very busy one then. But now people to many cities in the U. S. take international flights direct to Chicago, Washington D. C., Atlanta, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas and such. Thus JFK is not the busiest airport now. Chicago is No. 1 in the world. Atlanta was No. 1 in 1996 owing to the Olympic games. Now Chicago's OHare international airport is No.1 in the world. London's Heathrow stands second.

Finishing the Pro Oriente Syriac Consultation in Mundelein near Chicago I flew on Saturday July 12 from OHare to Newark, New Jersey. Fr. George K. Thomas of New Britain parish and Fr. Dmitri Eskander of Yonkers parish came to meet me. One of my two baggages had not arrived. "Please fill up the complaint form and telephone tomorrow," the airlines people said very casually. To them it is a daily occurrence. But to me it was annoying. Because my communion clothes for the next morning service were in the missing bag.

There is no point in making a fuss about it. When it arrives it will be given to me. I told them that I could not come again on Sunday as I was proceeding to Connecticut. Nevertheless I would be in the same airport on Monday morning. I could pick it up at that time if the office is open before 8 a. m. "We are open 24 hours," they stated. That news was some consolation. Yet what agitated my mind was how could it be delayed. Two bags were checked in at one time. There was no change of flight in between. But only my one bag and myself arrive at the destination. One bag is missing. I lost confidence in the efficiency of the computers, escalators, aerobridge and all claims of care-free travel which the airlines and their agents advertise "Leave all worry to us," they say. Perhaps they mean, "Leave your bags also to us. We will deliver it to you after your need is over or visit is completed."

Since my clerical clothes are in the delayed bag I had to borrow the clothes and the shoes from the parish priest for the communion service. Next day when I was returning from Newark airport I asked for my delayed

suitcase. The man at the counter asked me, "Are you sure that it has arrived?" I wanted to reply, "That is not my problem." "It is your duty to trace it and bring my suitcase. Because I did not lose it. I have the receipt."

I was not keen in ascertaining where the bag was. If he could not trace my bag it may be good for me. Perhaps they will buy a new suitcase and give me money to buy new religious clothes for the communion service. My clergy were complaining that I was using clothes old enough to be discarded. So if the airlines could not trace my suitcase it may turn out to be a blessing in disguise. I may stitch new clothes.

His Eminence Antony Cardinal Padiyara told a joke about an honest man whose umbrella fell in a well during a heavy storm and a rain. One strong police man went down in the well and lifted one good umbrella. He took it up and gave it to the old honest man. The honest man told him that it was not his umbrella, because his umbrella was very old. The police man went down to the well and climbed up with another umbrella and gave it to the old man. The honest man said that his umbrella was older than that. He did not want to accept such a better umbrella. Finally the police man got a third umbrella from the well. It was really old. But the honest man said, "Yes, that old umbrella was mine." When the old man was about to return home with his old umbrella, the police man ran after him and gave him the first two umbrellas also congratulating the old man for his honesty.

The next day the ugly-looking-wife of the same old man fell in the same well while drawing water. The same

police man who had helped him in the previous dream jumped into the water and took out a beautiful lady and handed over to the old honest man. He accepted the lady and walked home with her. God appeared to him and asked him, "Where is your honesty? Yesterday you were honest enough to tell that the good umbrella was not your own. Then why did you not tell today that the beautiful woman was not your wife and your wife was a ugly one. The honest man replied innocently and cleverly, "God, you know my poverty. If I told the truth like yesterday the strong police man would tell me, keep all three women as a bonus of my honesty." "How can I feed three women, when I cannot feed even one woman now?"

The question whether my present umbrella is an old one like this honest man is a redundant one. Because now I do not own an umbrella.

"What happened to you? You look smaller than what you were 20 years back," asked Deacon George Gilyan the senior deacon of the Church who penned a good poem in Syriac with the chorus "*Brikh ditha Brikh ditha Brikh ditha Lanyu Britain.*" I queried, have you seen me 20 years back?"

"No, but I have seen your picture in the consecration service of Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV in England in October 1976" said the deacon. "But I was not there" explained I.

"But are you not the consecrator of Patriarch Mar Dinkha?" asked he again. Then I explained to him that it was Mar Timotheus. He is older and taller than I am. Mar Timotheus is nearly 77 years old now. Then only

the deacon began to understand the mystery of my aging in the reverse direction. He thought that I had a terrible sickness which reduced my size and appearance by nearly 20 years.

Now-a-days many people are slimming on health grounds. When doctors give the ultimatum many people cut down their calories, skipping the meals, jogging and exercise like rope skipping. When I was a student in America I had heard young ladies used to fast to slim. It was not for health. It was because they could not afford to put on weight as their dresses could not get them in.

After the Holy Qurbana was over, a lady greeted me saying, "I am Marsha, the president of the committee." I made the mistake of correcting her, "Yes, the President of the committee of the women?" I was wrong.

After speaking at the breakfast reception I had to pose for photographs with many people. I do not know how many homes have my photos in their albums. I hope no papparazi have taken my photos. Some strangers have cliqued their cameras when I travel through airports and train stations. They are curious, not crazy, about my beard.

After some time of fellowship with the priest and his family in the parsonage Mr. Geevarghese Emmatty and his family drove me to the house of Samuel Pananchery. There was a prayer gathering and Kerala Supper in his family, in memory of his uncle Joseph Pananchery who had died in Trichur 40 days earlier. As relatives are living at distance all cannot attend the

weddings or funerals of uncles, cousins etc. It is very true of the Assyrians who have left their homeland Iraq Iran etc. for good.

When I was in the house of Samuel Pananchery I told him that the house where I was sitting was the same as I was visiting 2 years ago. Then how come the Voice of the East posted to him in this address was returned to Trichur. He explained to me that the house was the same. But they renumbered it changing from 5 to 4. It is a pity the post Office did send it back to India, although it was so easy for them to deliver it into new number in the same place. How can I in India trace the real number from such a distance?

Atlanta to California

After the stay in the home of Geevarghese Emmattayil in Bergenfield, New Jersey, I flew to Atlanta, Georgia via Chicago. I tried for a direct flight. But the United Airlines which issued "Visit U. S. A." (VUSA) tickets does not have a direct flight. One coupon in VUSA costs about \$150. So I preferred a direct flight to save me a coupon, that means \$150. But if I were to fly direct to San Francisco from New York it is only one coupon. It is a longer distance than Atlanta. As I had to break my journey in Atlanta to meet my brother Addison before going to San Francisco I needed three coupons, to Chicago to Atlanta and to San Francisco. That is \$450 instead of \$150.

These facts and figures are recorded here because it may be of benefit to some passengers to buy VUSA tickets. If they are not well informed about the routes of

different airlines it may be loss of money. Depending on our need to visit places one has to choose the airlines. Usually Travel Agents in India help us. But staff working in the offices of Travel Agencies are not well versed in the geography of USA. After reaching the USA, if we want to make changes in VUSA tickets there is a service charge of dollar 50. I experienced that the staff working in the counter of the United Airlines in the Airports were not sure how much surcharge I had to pay in making small changes in the route.

In Atlanta, my brother Addison and his son Aprem Mookan met me. Since he had heart problems recently his son was helping us in driving. Addison is younger to me (I am the 4th and he is the 8th in the family of ten.) But he is taller and heavier than I. Unless he reduces his weight and becomes like me, it is difficult to control his heart problems. Even my weight is overweight. I do not know how I can cut my obesity.

Addison's daughter Grace Marie who is only eleven was proud to show me the certificates she received during her graduation from elementary school. She has "A" grade in all papers and had a certificate of honour signed by president Bill Clinton of the U. S. She is not sure whether the signature was the original or is it a fascimile affixed by some member in the President's Oval office. Because the President of the U. S. has better and serious responsibilities than signing a school certificate.

Grace Marie has written a poem. I offered to publish it in *Voice of the East*. But she is not sure whether she should let her uncle publish it, or she should publish it

herself and become richer and famous. At last I am able to discover some literary talent in our family. I used to boast that I am the only writer in our family. My eldest brother's wife Lalu says that her father N. T. Joseph Nellickel house, Kottayam is a cousin (I guess a second cousin) of Mrs. Mary Roy whose daughter Arundhati Roy made one million dollars as advance to her first novel *God of Small Things* this year. At the time of writing this book her novel has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize, (the highest literary award in England).

In Atlanta Addison and children took me to see the Olympic Stadium. His wife Molly had to work in her office. Her mother Mrs. Grace Pappy Kurien from Trivandrum had come to spend a few months with her daughter's family. She stayed home to prepare Kerala food for me.

"Let us locate the brick which I purchased in the name of our parents," said Addison. At brick locator we pressed a button for Kochu Devassy and Kochu Mariyam but could not find the name. We were told they had to add 2,00,000 names more to that computer. They have not completed the work laying all the bricks for which people had paid.

Santa Barbara

From Atlanta I flew to San Francisco and immediately to Santa Barbara. My eldest brother drove me around the city. A lot of people walk around the waterfront. Some do fish. It is healthy to walk through that beautiful area. I took a train from Santa Barbara to San Diego.

My brother's wife Lalu and daughter Miriam and her husband Tony were delighted to see me. Their pet bitch had given birth to ten puppies. All the nine grew up. Two were there. I am not friendly with dogs. But I had to adjust to the situation. "They do not bite, but they only bark", says my niece. Yet a fear lurks in my mind "What happens if the dogs change their policy without prior notice."

From San Diego my second niece Michelle (Miki) drove me to Hollywood parish. Her sister wants her to be careful as we have to pass through bad area in Los Angeles in order to get to Hollywood. My "bold and beautiful" (That is the title of a Hollywood TV serial that appears even in India) niece drove me to Hollywood.

North Hollywood

Maggie and Eddy are the Assyrian hosts who offered hospitality for my stay in Hollywood. Edward was the former President of the committee of our parish there. Miki traced the home. The number of the house she had was not correct. But when we saw Eddy I said, "He looks like an Assyrian. Let us ask." Miki asked Eddy "Is this the right house?."

The priest of the parish Rev. Geevarghese Beth Rasho rushed to this house. "Sorry I am late," the priest said. After tea the priest said that he was going to leave me as he had to go to the Church for evening prayer. "Can I join you?" He replied "you are not expected there." I replied, "Everybody can pray. Even bishop can pray in the Church." I told him that I usually never miss the evening prayer in the Church, if I am near our Church in India,

Syria or Iraq. I persuaded him to let me go with him for the prayer.

As I was not expected for the evening prayer, the deacon was not there. "I will be your deacon" said the priest. He got ready with the *pirma* (Censer) in a few minutes. As a matter of fact he was my deacon for Qurbana in Mar Zaia Church, Modesto the previous year. He said he was the junior-most priest. Only a few months earlier he had been priested. He told me, "You belong to the first and I belong to the last batch. Malpan Kaku Lazar was a deacon when he taught me in India. He was an archdeacon when he taught this young priest in Chicago."

After the evening prayer I was happy to meet Shamasha Hasqiel who had assisted me in several holy services during September-October 1968 when I had spent six weeks in Bagdad after my consecration. He had assisted me also during my visit to Bagdad in 1977, 1981 and 1990. He told me that some six or seven years ago he had said good bye to the old calendar in Bagdad and migrated to America.

We had dinner in an Assyrian home. Mar Geevarghese Metropolitan of Iraq was there. After sumptuous dinner and pleasant conversation in the garden in the house I returned to the home of Maggie and Eddy. I read the gospel lessons for the next morning in modern Syriac. Although I am fluent in reading old language (*lishana athieqa*) I am not that confident in the modern language. After practising on my own on Saturday night I read it again on Sunday morning.

I sought the help of Maggie to listen to me and correct my pronunciation in their spoken language. Usually when I seek the help of the Assyrians to read their language they try to translate the words. I tell, "No, no. I know the meaning already. I have read Bible in many languages such as Malayalam, Greek and Hindi. Therefore I understand the meaning."

My problem is the exact pronunciation in their tongue so that the Assyrians would understand it. Since Maggie sings in the Church choir, she knows the correct pronunciation of the words from the Bible. Some times we think only clergy know to read Bible correctly. But I know there are women who can recite Bible better than I and many of my clergy. Unfortunately many of the eastern Churches consider female voice taboo. How much the male dominant community of the Jewish religion in the past has dominated Christian thinking.

The Qurbana on July 20th Sunday morning was well attended. After Qurbana we had a breakfast reception. I spoke there. Mar Geevarghese Sliwa Metropolitan also attended the functions. After my speech with several jokes ended, Mar Geevarghese Metropolitan humorously remarked "The thunder and lightening finished."

Joe Mookan and Miki had arrived early from Santa Barbara not only to attend my Qurbana but also to carry my baggage as I had to return to India the same evening. Although they do not know the language of liturgy known as Aramaic or Syriac they are familiar with this liturgy as we in India use the same liturgy with a few words still untranslated such as *Barekh Mar* (Bless my Lord).

One of the Assyrian deacons who sat with me for the breakfast George Atoraya Simnov known as Shamash Geevarghese Bet Simon is interested in intellectual and historical matters. He is President of Assyrian Enterprises which does printing, typesetting, photocopy, writing Desktop Publishing—Mac Consultation. The reader will forgive me if I sound promoting sales for the business of this Assyrian deacon. I am sure that there are some others who deserve mention in an account like this. But I could not meet all Assyrians in one day visit to this parish in North Hollywood.

I wish I had more time to be with these highly hospitable Assyrians. Some wanted to buy my humor books after they had heard me cracking some in reception meeting. Some wanted me to talk about Church history. I couldn't carry many books with me. As California was the last halt in this trip I had sold or given away some of the books in the previous weeks.

The priest's family was also a loving one. When I first telephoned to the priest, he was in the Church and so his daughter attended the phone. "Mar Aprem of India speaking", said I with hesitation whether the little daughter would understand my Indian English. She said "I will call my mum."

"*Kassi*, how are you? We look forward to your visit. We love you" said her mother. I began to wonder "Do they know me?" I was thinking even to hang up thinking that the priest's family may not know me at all. The priest told me, "the priest will call you when he comes from the Church." Yes, I am glad that the priest's family (wife and children) could play an important role in the pastoral ministry of the priest,

Before leaving the home of my hosts Maggie and Eddy I telephoned to trace the telephone number of the girl who I used to babysit in Princeton in 1967-68. I got the number from the directory enquiry. But she was out on vacation. The recorded message gave me her husband's number. His phone too had a recorded voice telling me to leave the message. I do not know whether he was playing the trick which some Americans do.

Once it surprised me. The moment I started dictating my message the recorded voice instantly became alive and asked, "Is it you, Bishop." I was confused. I said, "You are not supposed to be in your home." I understood then that some people want to avoid undesirable and cantakerous characters. They pick and choose after they hear the voice of the caller. This may help to avoid threatening calls.

Purposely I avoided mentioning here the name of the girl I used to babysit in Princeton. She made it to Hollywood. I do not think that she is a real celebrity. If so, I would not have succeeded even talking to her recorded voice. Her telephone number would have been unlisted and the operator at the telephone enquiry would have told me, "Sorry, I can't help you. Her number is unlisted." That means confidential.

The 6-year-old girl was one of the four children (one boy and 3 girls) of a visiting Professor in Princeton who now lives in Washington D. C. When I was leaving Princeton on 13 September 68 for my consecration in Bagdad she asked me, "Will you sit for us after you become bishop?" My reply was "I will sit for you if our Church allows it." After becoming a bishop I have

handled with care many babies while baptising and keeping my contacts with children of the Sunday school which incidentally are named "Mar Aprem Sunday School," many years before I was born.

Church in Moscow

Mar Geevarghese Sliva, Metropolitan of Iraq who has the additional charge of Russia and the former Soviet States, reported that the construction of our Church in Moscow was nearly complete. At present we are conducting communion service in the Church belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church. It must be stated to the credit of that 60-million-strong Russian Orthodox Church under Patriarch Alexi of Moscow to allow the use of the Church to the Assyrian Church which is not officially accepted as an Orthodox Church.

When I asked Mar Geevarghese Metropolitan how he managed to get funds for the construction of our Church he said that one businessman of our Assyrian community in Russia donated the land. There are four or five rich people in our Assyrian community.

Michael Gorbachev, the last President of the U. S. S. R., is taking interest for the construction of our Church for his Russian Orthodox faith. He donated 2 million roubles for the construction of Holy Virgin of Kazan Church in his own village PRIVOLNOYE. The construction of this Church had begun some years ago but could not be completed owing to lack of money. But Gorbachev took personal interest to complete the construction.

Recently there was a strong move in Russia to ban new cults with foreign funds working in Russia. The Duma (Parliament) of Russia had decided to ban new religious groups. Although the Russian Orthodox Church and the former communists had joined hands to get the new bill passed in both the chambers of the Russian Parliament America put pressure on President Boris Yeltsin of Russia to veto Duma's decision. It is stated in newspapers that the U. S. Congress on 17 July 1997 warned Yeltsin that all American aid to Russia would be withheld if he gave assent to the legislation banning new religious groups. Therefore for the time being many Protestant Churches and para Churches may be able to function in Russia.

One religious dignity in Moscow told me in 1992 that Russia is for the Russian Orthodox Church only. They do not want Protestants from America or Catholics from Rome to interfere in their religious ethos of several centuries.

Our Church will not be considered a problem in Russia. Because we have no intention of converting the Russians into our Church. We are serving only our Assyrian people who happened to live in Russian territory from the beginning of this century.

It was interesting to meet Mar Geevarghese Metropolitan and discuss about our Church in Moscow as well as in China where he had recently visited. As our Church was the first to go to China way back in 635 A. D. by Alopen I was interested to know more about it. Now our Church has no members in China. But historical monuments are there.

Universal Studios

I usually do not watch movies. Although I do not have TV in the Metropolitan's Palace where I live occasionally when I travel I may get time to watch a little bit of movie or show business. I know of Hollywood mainly from newspapers and magazines I read.

Bollywood is the name used for Bombay which is the movie capital of India. New Delhi is capital of India. But nobody makes movies there. Bombay and Madras are two places, where most of the movies are made. Bombay has changed its name to Mumbai but nobody has coined a word Mullywood. Similarly Madras city is renamed Chennai. Still there is no word like Chellywood.

I am surprised at the money people spent for movies. The real Hollywood movies have great attraction. Indian movies have very strict censorship. Hence some people get greater excitement when they watch imported stuff. The craze for Hollywood movies is evident from the following information available in *Indian Express* daily dated 17 Sept. 1997.

The Lost World a Hollywood movie made Rs. 6 million in the opening week in India. It was released on Sept. 5, 1997 in English, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu with 190 prints. It broke the 1994 record of *Jurassic Park* which was Rs. 37 million. Indians have money to spend. Watching movies is a favourite pastime. The long queue of people in front of cinema houses will block the traffic. When a show is over the people who walk out of a cinema theater often causes traffic jams.

For a long time friends have been telling me that it is worth visiting the Universal Studios in Hollywood. \$36 is the entrance fee for one person. Therefore I hesitated. I always convert dollars in mind to Indian rupees. Miki had a 15% discount card. Still it is about \$30.

It is more than Rs. 1,000 and for two people it is Rs. 2,000. I did not want my niece Miki to spend such an amount. Since she was born in the U. S. A., she did not think that it was that big an amount. When I was studying in the U. S. A. (1966-68) I didn't try for a green card, so that no permission to work.

For those like me who did not work or earn in the U. S. A. a dollar is really Rs. 36. But those Indians who work in the U. S. A. say dollar may not look like 36, but only 3 or 2. If a priest in the U. S. A. is getting dollar 3,000 a month, it is as good as Rs. 6,000 in India. Of course a priest's salary is not a comfortable salary. 99% of the priests in India cannot afford a car.

There were thousands of people queuing up at the entrance of the Universal Studios. It took about 45 minutes to get in. Even after getting in the grounds there were long queues at the entrance of different shows. One cannot see all the programmes in less than four hours. I wanted to reach our Church before the evening prayer (*Ramsha*). So I had to choose only some of the shows and rush through it.

It is not inside the rooms the tourists are taken. We are watching outside settings. How artificial floods, thunder and similar tricks are shown to make us believe

that it is real. One has to go through it to realize how they create such things like guerrillas attacking trains etc

In the sets of some western movies two real people came and one cowboy shot his opponent with some sort of bullets. The man fell down from the top of the building. He got up after two minutes before the next train of tourists reached the spot, ready to be shot again.

Computer

Many well wishers of mine asked me whether I wrote all my books with the help of the computers. It is not a luxury in the U. S. A. Most people use computers. Even small children in elementary schools use it. When I told them that I do not know how to use a computer, it was news to them.

The readers should not form a wrong notion that computer is unknown in India. There are four computers for every thousand in India. Not only banks but even the railway clerks and post offices began to use computers in India.

India has joined the select club of six advanced countries with the making of the country's first super computer-*Param*. This super computer is designed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) at Pune near Bombay (now known as Mumbai). It has a peak power of 1 Giga-flop. It has an array of applications. We can do modelling of oil reservoir or molecular modelling for drug and chemical design of new materials or such amazing things which my ordinary mind cannot comprehend even at my wildest imagination.

News about India

Whether on T. V. or the daily newspapers very little coverage is on India. The Indians living in the U. S. A. have started on their own newspapers for knowing what is happening in India. There are several newspapers in our mother tongue Malayalam which collect news through E Mail and other sources and print small Malayalam newspapers or weeklies. That is a reliable source for knowing what is happening in our homeland. Since I was moving among the Assyrians rather than my compatriots from India I heard very little about India.

Gianni Versace

When I was in California the mega news was the shooting of the Italian fashion designer Gianni Versace. When my brother was driving me in his car from the airport in Santa Barbara the news on the radio was that the police was working hard to trace the suspected killer Andrew Cunanan whose father lives in Manila, Philippines. Cunanan went to school at the Tony Bishop's school in La Jolla in the neighbourhood of San Diego.

Although police could not arrest him, Cunanan committed suicide. The *NEWS WEEK* dated July 28, 1997 published from New York which is circulated by the Public Library, Trichur has a lot of space given not only to Gianni Versace, the billionaire fashion businessman, but also on the gigilo named Cunanan who was absconding at that time.

Despite the massive manhunt by the police all over the U. S. A. they could not trace him. Even if the world

discovers electronic gadgets and mobile phones which should help catching the culprits the crimes are increasing. Culprits are avoiding arrests knowing better techniques of hiding and travelling disguised.

Many mourned the death of Versace. Although ordinary people (that include the present writer) couldn't pronounce his name properly and spell his name correctly he was the talk of all Americans for several days.

\$900 million was the calculated worth of his fashion designing empire. His clients included Princess Diana. When people do not have enough to possess a piece of cloth to cover his or her nakedness, people revel in luxury about the designs of the clothe they are wearing. Often it goes shorter and shorter. When the world progresses more, Eve's leaf may become the ultimate word in the latest fashion.

Since Cunanan has committed suicide I hope that the American public does not have to watch their TV to decide the crime of Cunanan as they debated whether O. J. Simpson had actually murdered his former wife and her friend.

T. V. News

One important news I watched on T. V. was Mike Tyson biting the ear of his opponent in a boxing. Of course ear-biting has become news in India too. *The Indian Express* dated August 12, 1997. P. 10 has an article captioned *Clash of The Tysons* with another title *Politics of the discredited*. Referring to the periods of infighting and crises in Indian politics, Shekhar Gupta compares. ...

"Displaying the kind of wit the Janatha Dal politicians trend to discover only during periods of infighting and crises, one erudite party luminary described Deva Gowda (former Prime Minister) as the Mike Tyson of Indian politics : If I can't win, I shall bite your ear off."

Hope many people will not go the Tyson way.

O. J. Simpson

O. J. Simpson too was on T. V. screens as he was during my 1995 and 1996 visits. Even during my visit to Europe in 1994 I watched on T. V, the unprecedented cheering of the people in the streets of Los Angeles when the police chased O. J. Simpson to arrest him for the murder of his wife. It is incredible to believe that his name makes news even after 3 years. How many billions of dollars are lost for the expensive prime time on T V and hours the American people watched the trial on the T. V. I guess even Bill Gates, the computer billionaire of Microsoft, will be appalled if his computers calculate the total loss of the time of people, courts, media and such on this one murder.

Religious Channel

In the U. S. A. there is one channel on T V which shows religious programmes. Both Protestants and Catholics have programmes at different times. I saw Billy Graham, Jerry Hinn and others. Good music and Bible studies were on. There is the usual appeal for financial support for the programmes. In fairness to the sponsors I must say most of the donations received as a result of

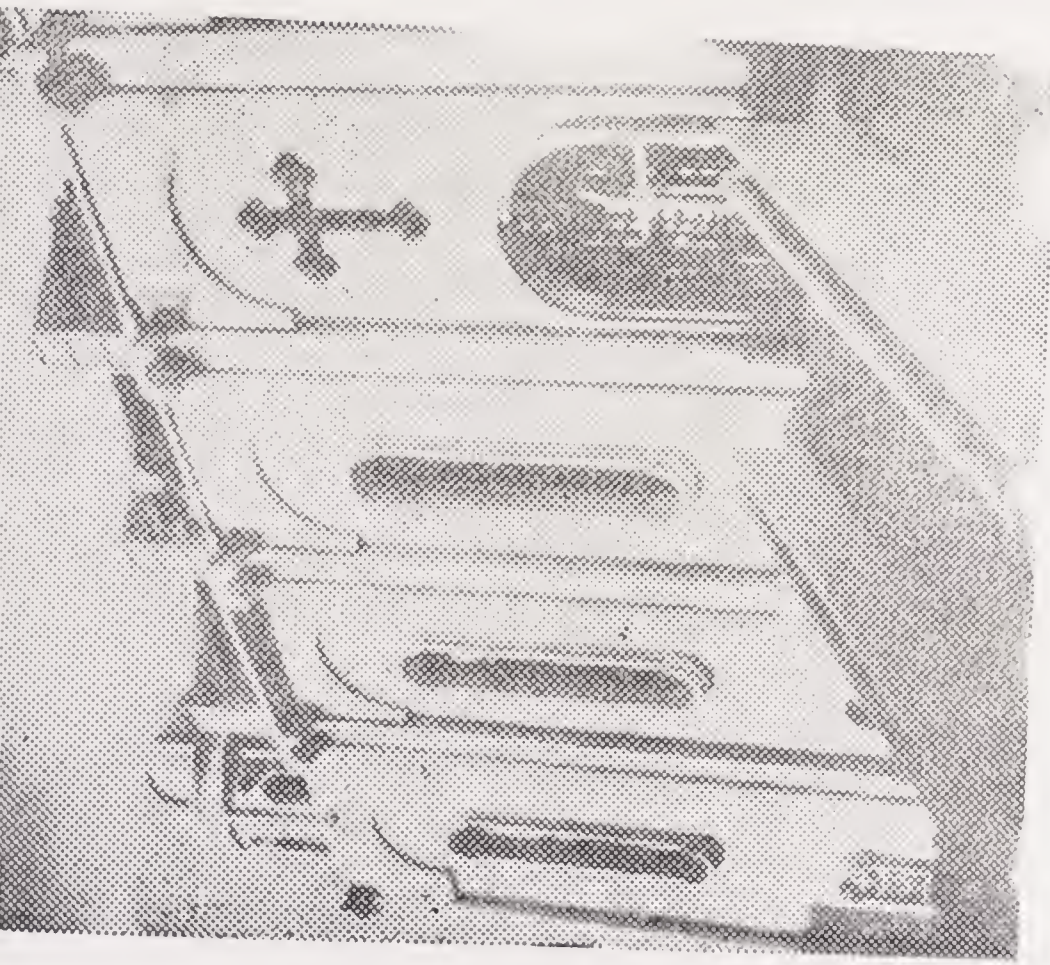
these T V appeals are necessary for the production costs of such programmes. There was a time when some commercially minded evangelists made money by such appeals. They are called tele-evangelists.

But now there are controls and checks to insure accountability of such public appeals for funds. The taxmen in the U. S. A. are vigilant about religions raising funds. We should render unto Caesar what is Caesar's even if it is raised in God's name. There are many little gods or godmen even in India, revelling in money and luxury. It is necessary to have proper surveillance. Many people in all religions and cults are crazy for power and money. May God Almighty save us from such godmen.

Return to India

After midnight of the Sunday 20th July I flew from Los Angeles to Seoul, Korea. This flight was only 11 hours instead of 12½ hours it took on my non-stop flight from Seoul to Chicago. The flight was about an hour late to take off. Hence it was early morning of 21st Monday when we actually took off. After a few hours when our plane crossed date line over Japan it became 22nd Tuesday. Without much delay we got the connecting flight to Bombay.

On the night of Tuesday 22nd July at about 9 p. m. I was back in Bombay. I did not adjust my watch because all these five weeks my watch was on Indian time only.



Marth Mariyam Cathedral in Hassake



Archdeacon Geevarghese Athniel in his office
at Hassake Syria,, October 1996

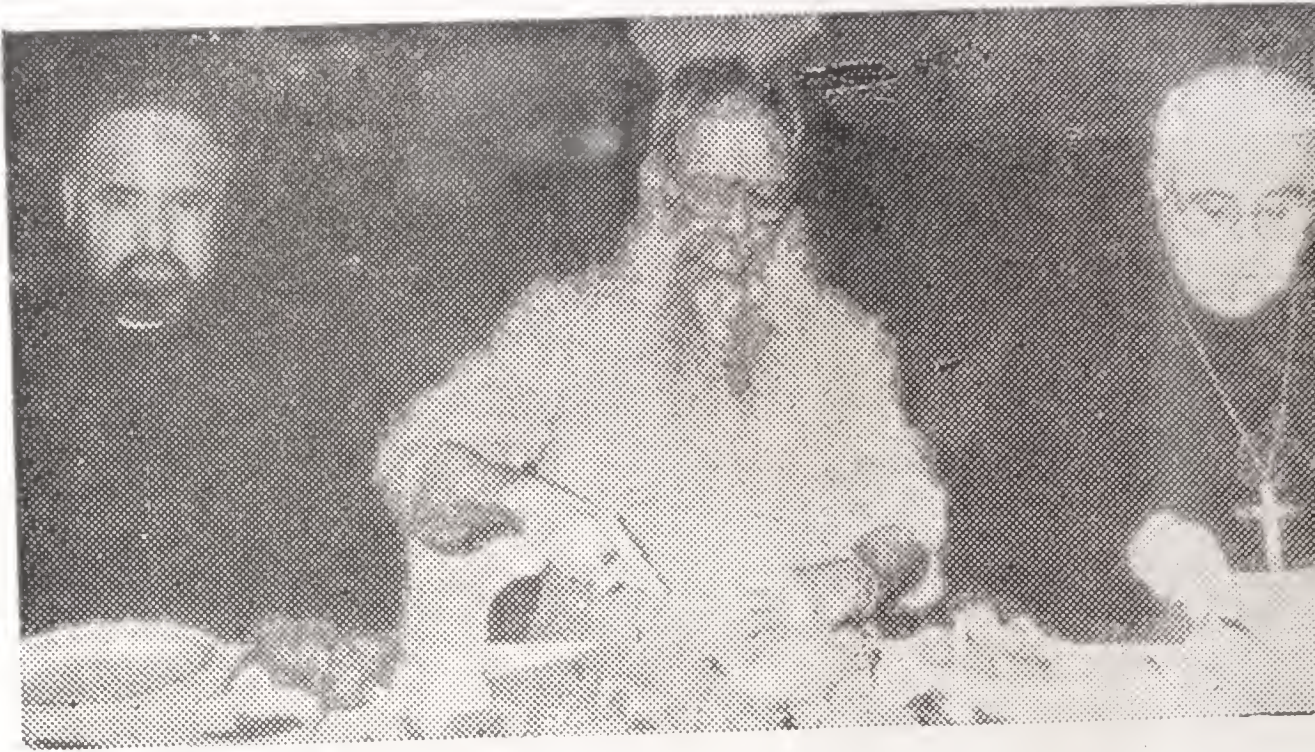


Saraspiedo. Syria. Mar Aprem is seated between Archdeacon Athniel Geevarghese and Rev. George Thon of New Britain, Connecticut, U. S. A. during the breakfast in memory of Officer Dinkha. October 1996

Photo next page

Tell Tamar, in Syria. Mar Aprem with clergy.
October 1996.





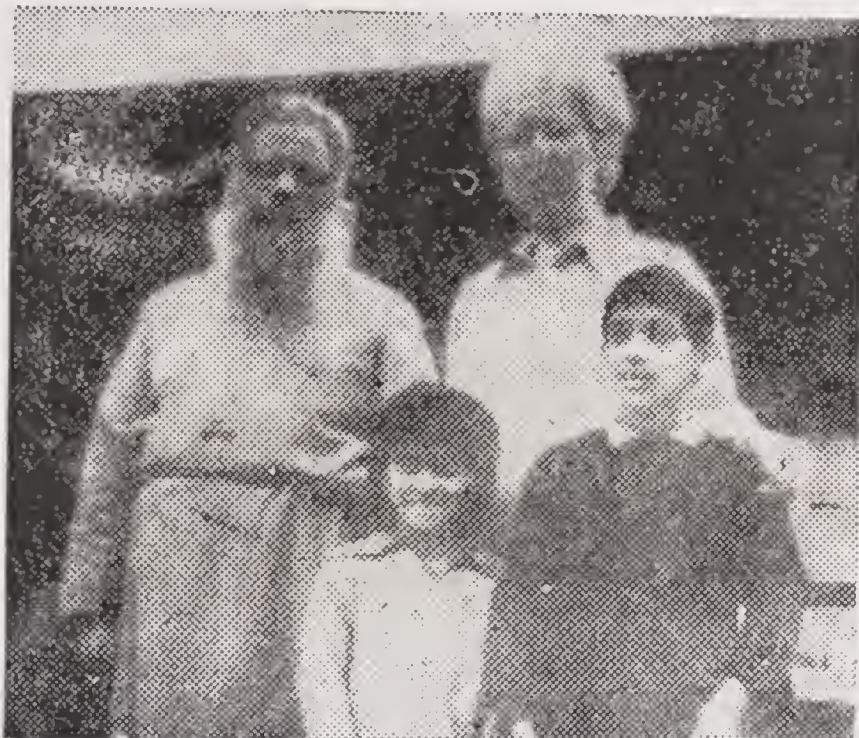
Breakfast after Qurbana in the St, Marys Assyrian Church
Hanwell near Ealing, London 2 March 1997.
Archdeacon Yonan Y. Yonan and Rev. Esthapanose Turka
(Vicar) on either side of Mar Aprem.



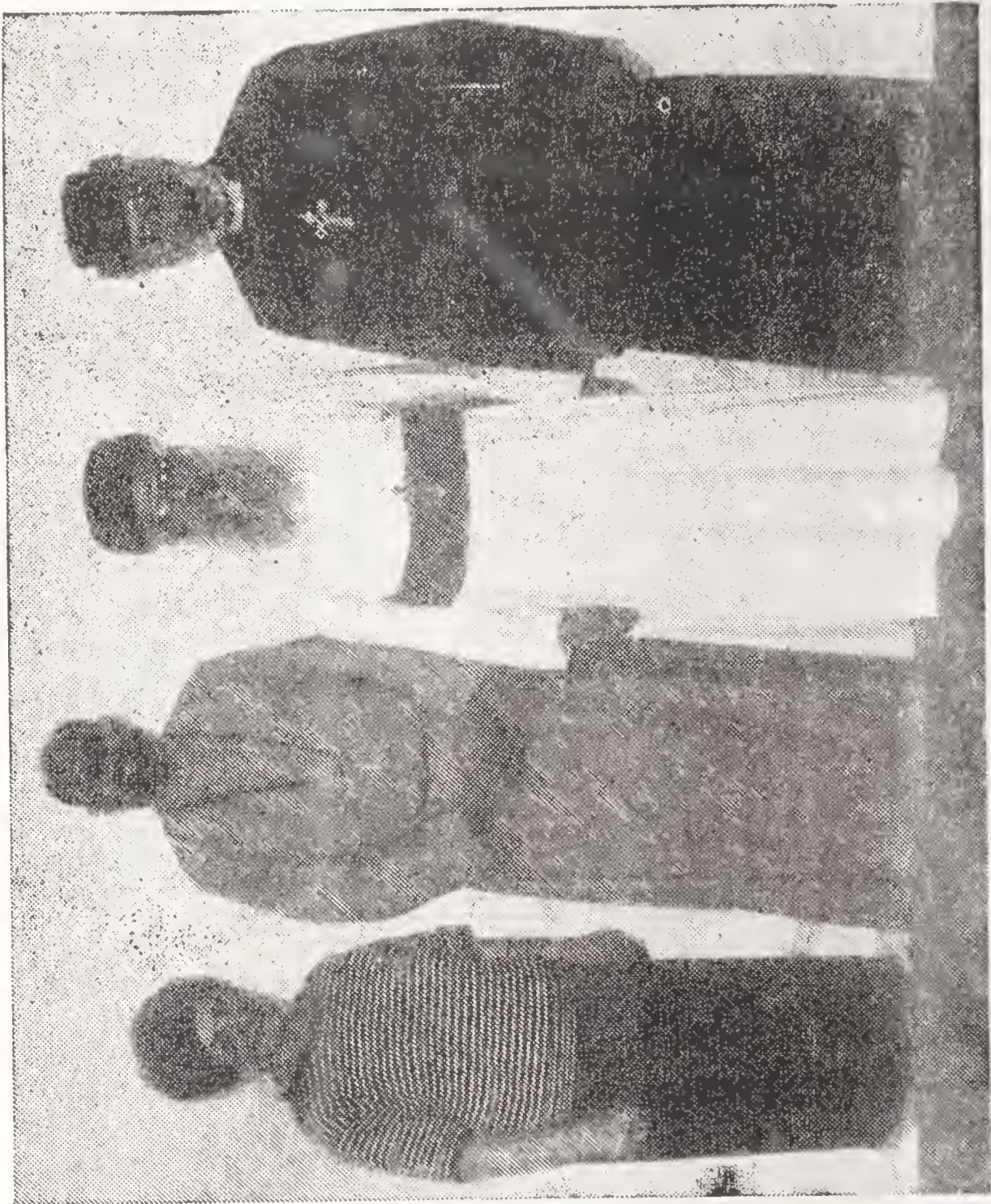
Mar Aprem with the Assyrian family of Eshaya Chemma
Ramson, son of Fr. William Yakob of Gotheburg,
Sweden is seen on the right end.



The sister of Mar Aprem (Sushela) and her husband Dr. N. V. George of Rugby seated with Mar Aprem after the breakfast in the Assyrian Club, Ealing. Standing behind are their children Teresa, Verghese George and Dr. Sheena George



Christopher and Jenni adopted by Sigfried & Merlene Muller in Bonn, Germany. Seen with their mouth organ teacher Mrs. Freilunghaus during Mar Aprem's visit to Bonn on 6 March 1997.



Left to Right: Dickson, Mary, Boylston, and...



Prelates and clergy of the Church of the East at Mar Geevarghese Cathedral
in Chicago 20 June 1997



With Children adopted from M. T. M. Orphanage, Thrissur living in Illinois and Iowa.
I to R. John. Beena. Mary, Mar. Aprem, Alice, Anne



At New Britain, Connecticut on 13 July 97, Fr. George Thoma is on the right side of Mar Aprm.

BOOKS BY Dr. MAR APREM

Biographies

- 1 Mar Thoma Darmo-A Biography pp. 214,
- 2 Mar Abimalek Timotheus-A Biography pp. 282,
- 3 Mar Abdisho Thondenat pp. 136,
- 4 Strange But True: An Autobiography pp. 236,
- 5 Not So Strange " " Part II pp. 236,

Church History

- 6 Nestorian Fathers (Out of Print) pp. 168,
- 7 Nestorian Missions (Reprint 1985) pp. 134,
- 8 The Chaldean Syrian Church in India pp. 241,
- 9 The Council of Ephesus of 431 pp. 196,
- 10 Sacraments of the Church of the East pp. 142,
- 11 Nestorian Theology pp. 183,
- 12 Nestorian Lectionary & Julian Calendar pp. 140,
- 13 Western Missions Among Assyrians pp. 152,
- 14 A Nestorian Bibliography pp. 128,
- 15 Indian Christian Who is Who pp. 210,
- 16 The Chaldean Syrian Church of the East
(ISPCK, Delhi) (out of Print) pp. 64,
- 17 Good News Festivals in India pp. 224,
- 18 Indian Christian Directory pp. 264,
- 19 Mar Aprem, Theologian & Poet pp. 136,

Travelogues

- 20 America Revisited pp. 148,
- 21 From Bagdad to Chicago pp. 168,
- 22 Australian Assyrians pp. 132,
- 23 To Belgium and Holland via UK & USA pp. 124,
- 24 Sydney to Canberra pp. 128,
- 25 The Assyrians in Iraq pp. 112,
- 26 Germany via Vienna pp. 140,
- 27 Washington to New York pp. 133,
- 28 London to Moscow pp. 134,
- 29 Los Angeles To Tokyo pp. 136,
- 30 Oxford to Austria pp. 144,
- 31 Salzburg to Boston pp. 140,
- 32 Israel, Scandinavia & U. S. A. pp. 112,
- 33 Hassake To Hollywood pp. 112,

Humour

34	Bishop's Jokes (Reprint 1995)	p.p. 180,	1983
35	Laugh with the Bishop (Bombay)	p.p. 95,	1988
36	Laugh to Health (C. L. S., Madras)	p.p. 82,	1992
37	Holy Humour	p.p. 104,	1993
38	Joy to the World	p.p. 104,	1994
39	Holy Smile	p.p. 100,	1997

General

40	From Relief to Development A profile of CASA	p.p. 282,	1979
41	Teach Yourself Aramaic (Reprint 1993)	p.p. 152,	1981
42	Behold the Cross of Calvary	p.p. 152,	1987
43	Sermons from the Gospels Vol. I	p.p. 208,	1988
44	Sermons from the Gospels Vol. II	p.p. 138,	1990
45	The Nestorian Canon Law	p.p. 120,	1995
46	Mesopotamia Light	p.p. 128,	1993

Malayalam

47	An Introduction to the History of the Eastern Churches (Reprint, 1990)	p.p. 196,	1976
48	Christeeya Bhakti Ganangal	p.p. 124,	1985
49	സഭാചരിത്ര നിഘണ്ടു (ed.)	p.p. 424,	1985
50	ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ കാൽപ്പാടുകളിലൂടെ	p.p. 168,	1985

To be published (1998-99)

51	Assyrian Fathers		
52	Syriac Manuscripts in India		
53	Poems & Prayers		
54	Advanced Aramaic		
55	Voices of the East (Editorials)		

On Patriarch's right : From R to L

Mar Narsai Metropolitan, Le banon.

Mar Aprim Khamis, Chicago.

Poulose Mar Poulouse, India.

Mar Meelis Zaia, Australia.

Mar Emmanuel, Canada.

On Patriarch's left : From L to R

Mar Aprem Metropolitan, India

Mar Geevarghese Sliwa, Metropolitan, Iraq.

Mar Yosip Sargis, Bagdad.

Mar Bawai Soro, Seattle.

Mar Odisho Oraham, Europe.

